



THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Mainly warm and sunny (45p) 40p

INSIDE THE TABLOID

IN THE TABLOID
6 PAGES OF FILMS

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ENIS COMPTON:
PORT'S FIRST
SUPERSTAR

'Think again. Look in my eyes and know this: I will always deal fair and true'

Colin Brown and Anthony Bevins

John Major last night stepped up his election campaign with an amazing appeal to voters - "look in my eyes" - and to back him rather than his party.

With just one week to go, and all to play for, the Conservative leader made a savage personal attack on Tony Blair as a man who breaks his promises, and

deal fair and true by this great nation.

Mr Major was exploiting the undoubted fact that he is more popular with the voters than his party, fractious and divided as it is. But last night's appeal was also a gamble on the public's willingness to see the election as a presidential contest between two party leaders.

With Labour officials warning of the "nightmare" prospect of a fifth Tory term, and the confirmation of a one-party state, Mr Blair's positive campaign yesterday turned to a new initiative to create a special "People's Lottery" fund, to divert Elton into popular causes like education and health.

But the Tories last night delivered a diversionary coup by publishing a copy of an old Labour election "War Book" setting out strategic campaign targets. Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party Chairman, said the document, sent to the Tories "in a plain brown envelope" six months ago, indicated a campaign based on "smear and scare".

He suggested that the leak could have come from a Labour Party worker who was as appalled by "the cynical attitude of those he was working with as the rest of the country will be when they see this document".

All parties have "War Books", setting out day-by-day campaign strategies, but they normally remain confidential, and Labour said last night that the document that had been sent to the Conservatives was a year old, out of date, and did not include its election masterplan.



The document's summary of Labour weaknesses, it was said, were not Labour assessments, but rather a summary of Conservatives' views.

While Tory campaign strategists are focusing on private polling showing the voters do not trust Mr Blair, Labour campaign managers have noted that the Tories have stopped running their "New Labour, New Danger" poster, with a red-eyed Mr Blair.

They believe that such vicious personal attacks are provoking voter hostility.

Nevertheless, Mr Major last night went for the Labour leader in a strong personal attack, questioning his fitness for office - a strategy that will be reinforced in the final days of the campaign.

Contrasting his own leadership style with Mr Blair's, Mr Major said: "Like me or loathe me, on the issues I put before you today you know where I stand."

He accused Mr Blair of having "shifted and shuffled and shifted again" on his plans for a Scottish parliament with tax-raising powers. "I do not truly believe Mr Blair understands Scotland. I wonder sometimes how much he even cares for Scotland. More and more recently he has seemed to care

more for the use he can make of Scotland.

"His policy combines a sense of carelessness with a whiff of arrogance that I for one find slightly unappealing... Mr Blair seems incapable of keeping to one policy for more than a few months."

Ridiculing Mr Blair as "the young mastermind" who said "pass" to questions in the campaign, Mr Major said the Labour leader "in all his experience may not realise that these questions, unanswered, might eventually do our Union to death."

He accused Mr Blair of changing policy to suit his own convenience, and seeking power for its own sake - to win whatever the price. "I see the Labour red is changing to an imperial purple - and I see a man carried away by his own propaganda. How many more promises does Mr Blair have to break before the people of Britain understand his true nature?"

Warning that Mr Blair would "sell out" Britain in Europe, Mr Major said Labour posed three great threats to Britain - more power for the unions, a soft touch for a federal Europe and paving the way for separatism with Scotland. "Labour, led by Mr Blair, will destroy British prosperity, risk dividing Britain and put us on the escalator to a federal Europe."

Labour received a dual boost last night from opinion polls which showed its support holding up, and the announcement that Alan Sugar, the arch-rival of Thatcherite boss of computer company Amstrad, has switched allegiance to Labour.

Labour is 19 per cent ahead of the Conservatives, according to a Gallup poll for ITN's Channel 4 News.

Tories have stopped running their New Labour, New Danger poster with a red-eyed Mr Blair

someone with a "whiff of arrogance" about him.

But it was the plea to the electorate to put their trust in him, rather than his party, that marked the change of Tory tactics. In an italicised passage of a text issued in Aberdeenshire last night, Mr Major said: "I appeal to you. Don't let whatever doubts you may have had about the Conservative Party in the past weigh with you, when the future of the United Kingdom may be at stake."

"Think about it. Think seriously. Think again. Look in my eyes and know this. I will always

Travel firms' staff paid to inform on customers

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

Britain's travel agents are being paid to operate as undercover drug informants. High street sales staff, along with booking agents for airlines and ferries, are given substantial cash rewards by HM Customs in return for "tip-offs" about suspected drug-runners and money launderers.

Customs and Excise officers are also providing training and advice for would-be informers about how to spot a criminal, and a hotline to report them. Successful "snouts" can earn from £50 to as much as £10,000 in exceptional cases.

It is understood that one of the four largest travel agents gets about 20 reports of suspicious customers every day, although the majority of these are false alarms.

The use of informants is being encouraged in all parts of the travel industry.

British Airways is offering to pay its staff extra bonuses, in addition to any Customs rewards, for positive reports. Assistance from BA staff at London airports helped Customs officers make 56 drug seizures, worth about £7m, in the first six months of last year.

Travel agents are encouraged to look out for holiday-makers acting suspiciously. Among the tell-tale signs are customers who pay for holidays or flights with large sums of cash, have new passports (they may be forged), are not interested in getting a cheap deal, take trips to well known drug centres such as Holland, Jamaica, and Thailand, and who pay at the last minute.

A Customs spokesman said:

"We are after things that will arouse peoples' suspicion, which might be connected with drug-smuggling."

"Occasionally the information leads to seizures and arrests but more often it adds another piece to the jigsaw."

He added: "If someone gave us the names, dates and delivery, of a major drugs operation they could get from £20,000 to £30,000 reward, but this is not the kind of detailed information travel agents come across."

The drugs hotline - 0800 595000 - receives about 2,500 calls a month, although the proportion of these that are made by travel agents is unknown.

Travel companies were quick yesterday to play down the idea that their staff had become paid spies.

Thomas Cook, the fourth largest travel agent, trains all new employees about how to identify suspected criminals. A spokeswoman said: "They have a prompt card with key points to look out for."

Details of suspicious customers are passed on to the head office, as the company encourages employees collecting reward money.

Lynn Poly, Britain's largest travel agent, confirmed it has "security procedures" which were used by staff to identify potential offenders, but refused to discuss any of the details. A spokeswoman denied that staff received cash rewards. "There's no sanction from head office [for Customs] to recruit staff."

Informers are increasingly being used to help tackle the growing drug problem. There were record seizures last year, which rose by 6 per cent to 115,000, the highest ever.

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THE INDEPENDENT

election '97

Elephants on pill trample family values

Mary Braid
Johannesburg

Any proponent of sound conservative family values could have told them how it would end. In a world first, wild elephants were introduced to the Pill. Now, six months later, the bold experiment has gone disastrously wrong. Elephant society is falling apart.

After six months of intervention in South Africa's Kruger National Park, the resulting possibilities of elephantine free love have proved a social disaster. On offer was jumbo-sized birth control. The result was social and sexual mayhem.

In six months no cow has become pregnant despite the unflagging - not to say embarrassing - attention of the bulls. But families have broken down. In the explosive sexual atmosphere, responsibilities are forgotten. Two baby elephants have gone missing and are presumed dead. Dr Grobler and his staff believe they strayed from home because their mothers were permanently distracted.

The elephant pill's unforeseen effects will encourage critics who condemned the controversial programme from the start as an extravagant waste of money, driven by human sentimentality.

Rural development groups argued elephants should be free to have as many calves as they pleased, and to expand

their families to the size God intended. Rural African communities could then kill and eat the surplus.

Mr Grobler admitted yesterday that the programme was motivated by a sentimental desire to create a painless method of population control which would keep herds small, happy and well cared for. The idea of simply letting populations explode and culling later he said was considered "barbaric" by some.

Mr Grobler now acknowledges the Kruger was misguided. Unwanted pregnancies have been prevented but the social cost has been too high a price to pay.

Yesterday he said the programme was shelved, and the behaviour of elephants closely watched to ensure it



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news

significant shorts

Howard rebuffed by Belfast judge in IRA jail review

Another judicial rebuff was handed down to Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, yesterday when a "whole life" prison tariff on two IRA bombers was overruled by a High Court judge in Belfast.

Mr Justice Kerr said Mr Howard had wrongly declined to explain why he had departed from the view of the trial judge and the former Home Secretary, David Waddington, when increasing the minimum term to be served by Paul Kavanagh and Thomas Quigley, who were convicted at the Old Bailey in 1985 of three murders arising out of two London bombings.

The trial judge, Mr Justice McCowan, fixed the tariff at 35 years, later increased to 50 by Mr Waddington, but the then Lord Chief Justice, Lord Lane, had said he would not release them at all. Quashing Mr Howard's decision to revise the tariff up to whole life, Mr Justice Kerr said: "I consider that the Home Secretary was obliged to explain why he was minded to depart from the judicial view expressed by Mr Justice McCowan and to increase the tariff beyond that which had been fixed by the former home secretary."

Patricia Wynn Davies

'Dangerous' killer on the run

A convicted murderer was on the run after escaping from prison, police said yesterday.

Frank Winslow-Smith, 31, went missing from Wellingborough Prison, Northants. Winslow-Smith was serving a life sentence plus an 11-year sentence. Police said he was "dangerous and unpredictable" and should not be approached.

New corruption trial for Army officer

The jury trying a senior Army officer on corruption charges was discharged at London's Southwark Crown Court yesterday and a new trial ordered to begin today.

Major John Ewart, 51, of Dilton Marsh in Wiltshire, was responsible for ordering food for the British garrison in Berlin, denies taking "well over" £100,000 in "backhanders" in return for feeding lucrative contracts to a British company.

James Bond picks German marque



James Bond is driving a German car again in his next movie, it emerged yesterday. Actor Pierce Brosnan (pictured) will have a BMW 750i executive saloon in the new film, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, which is due to be released in December.

BMW fought off stiff competition from Jaguar and Aston Martin to secure the agreement – and it looks as though the famous Aston Martin DB5 has definitely been driven out of Q's equally famous workshop for the last time.

Contract killers get life jail terms

The daughters of accountant David Wilson finally put a five-year ordeal behind them last night after watching the contract killers who executed their father receive life jail terms.

The nightmare for Michelle Wilson, 31, and her younger sister Lisa, 29, began when hitmen Stephen Playle and Michael Crossley burst into their luxury Lancashire home on March 5, 1992 and shot their father dead.

The murder led a Lancashire Police team on a trail that took them halfway across the world as they brought to justice the sinister American criminal Michael Austin, who ordered the murder, and his UK middleman Stephen Schepke, both now serving life sentences.

It came full circle at Liverpool Crown Court yesterday when Mr Justice Mantell sent friends Crossley and Playle to prison for life.

Royal bodyguard on guns charges

Royal Protection Squad policeman Michael Coulton was remanded in custody when he appeared before magistrates on firearms charges yesterday.

Mr Coulton, 52, appeared before magistrates in Bracknell, Berks, on three firearms charges, which allege that on a date between February 23 and April 22 he was in possession of a home-made firearm with intent to endanger life. A second charge related to the possession of the home-made firearm without holding a firearms certificate. He was also charged with possessing a machine gun on 16 January.

Equity agrees actors' pay rise

Equity leaders yesterday agreed new minimum pay for actors of £225 a week from this year. Actors' minimum pay will rise to £250 a week from April 1998, and by inflation plus 2 per cent from April 1999. A new company and stage manager grade has also been introduced with minimum pay of £261 a week from April 1997.

Frozen food threat to UK bats

Freezing nights are causing bats to starve because they have caused their insect food supply to die out. The bats were encouraged out of hibernation by the warm spells of early Spring, but the frosts have left them little in the way of moths and other night flyers to eat.

"I've never seen so many malnourished bats at this time of year," said bat expert Patty Briggs of the Bat Conservation Trust.

people



Terre'Blanche: A pathetic, farcical figure who floundered from the court (Photograph: Reuters)

Tantrums and tears as Terre'Blanche convicted

Eugene Terre'Blanche, the neo-Nazi many once feared would plunge South Africa into bloody civil war, was yesterday convicted of attempting to murder a former black employee and assaulting another.

The verdict on the country's most infamous white supremacist led to extraordinary scenes in the Potchefstroom Magistrate's Court, which was packed with camouflage-clad followers of Terre'Blanche's Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB).

The large and hefty AWB leader, whom black witnesses said they were afraid to testify against, fought back tears as he accused magistrate Chris Ertman, judicial head of this ultra-conservative rural "dorp" in North-West Province, of becoming the accomplice of the African National Congress. "You are a traitor, the judgment is a political judgment," he said.

There were more tears when bail was set at 2,000 rand (£300). Terre'Blanche said he could not afford it and promised he would not "abscond before sentencing on June 17. The judge reduced bail by half and the AWB clubbed together to meet it.

Potchefstroom is at the heart of AWB country.

Apartheid may be gone but here old habits die hard. AWB members routinely insulted and intimidated blacks who attended the trial. Throughout the proceedings the fat white AWB members sat and forced the blacks to stand at the back of the courtroom.

Maurius Oltner, who worked for Terre'Blanche, testified against his "boss", but asked for police protection and claimed his employer had assaulted him too.

Terre'Blanche was found guilty of attempting to murder Paul Motshabi, a black hobbler who courted him after he was beaten by a month-long coma and permanent brain damage by Terre'Blanche.

Terre'Blanche claimed to have argued with Motshabi but not to have harmed him. He said he had found Motshabi lying in a ditch.

The AWB hit international headlines in 1994 when three members were shot dead by a black policeman after shooting their way through the black Bophuthatane "independent" homeland in an attempt to prevent an inevitable black liberation coup.

Mary Stodd, Johannesburg

Billie-Jo's mother in tearful exit from funeral

The natural mother of Billie-Jo Jenkins (right) missed her daughter's funeral yesterday, after storming out of the chapel in tears when the murdered teenager's foster mother arrived uninvited. Debbie Woods had specifically asked that the foster mother, Lois Jenkins, should stay away from the packed service in east London for the popular 13-year-old.

Ms Woods entered the chapel after the horse-drawn carriage carrying Billie-Jo's 5ft white coffin had arrived. She was followed by almost 300 of the teenager's friends and relations, clinging to each other for support in their grief, many of whom had made the journey from Billie-Jo's home town of Hastings, East Sussex.

But then Mrs Jenkins, whose estranged husband Siôn has been charged with Billie-Jo's murder, arrived for the service with her four daughters. As soon as she walked into the chapel, just moments before the service was due to begin, Ms Woods looked around, saw her and froze in horror.

Mourners watched in shock as Ms Woods then ran out of the chapel in tears followed by her boyfriend. The couple then drove away from the City of London Cemetery and missed the service as well as the burial.

Siôn Jenkins, who is currently



on bail, did not attend the service. He is accused of bludgeoning Billie-Jo to death as she painted the patio doors of her foster family's home in Hastings on 15 February.

A friend of Ms Woods explained afterwards: "Lois is obviously grieving as much as anyone but she is married to the man charged with murdering Billie-Jo and she should really have respected Debbie's wishes and stayed away to prevent further grief."

"Debbie is heartbroken at not being able to see her daughter being laid to rest. It is a tragedy for her."

However, a friend of Mrs Jenkins defended her, saying: "She loved Billie-Jo so much that she could not bear not to come to the funeral with her four daughters."

Four-year-old 'Tiger' tees off

He is more of a tiger cub than a Tiger Woods, but four-year-old Robert Aldred's precocious golfing skills have prompted his father to predict he will be the next prodigy on the greens.

Robert has surprised golfers at his local club with his "unbelievable" ability. According to his father, Bob, he has managed to par several three- and four-par holes up to 345 yards in length. He can also drive a golf ball up to 140 yards.

As a result, he has achieved what many a social-climbing executive can only dream of – free membership of his local golf club, at Warley in the West Midlands.

Mr Aldred said that if his son progresses at the same rate he could be Britain's answer to Tiger Woods, who recently became the youngest winner of the US Masters at the age of 21.

"I'm absolutely gobsmacked by some of the things he has done," Mr Aldred said at his home in Warley.

"He is the equivalent of a single figure handicapper given some of the things he does. His drives are unbelievable – he can hit them 80-90 yards every time."

A spokesman for the Professional Golfers' Association said: "Robert has obviously taken to the game naturally and he could be a natural champion." Mark Rowe

briefing

SCHOOLS

Problem governors drive head teachers to retirement

Feeble and inefficient governors are driving head teachers to early retirement, according to a survey published yesterday. The study, by the National Association of Head Teachers, says that more than half of heads believe their governors either cannot or will not do their job.

Others, say heads, interfere too much. They complain that some are trying to change the curriculum for political reasons, while others are storming into classrooms and telling teachers how to teach. Government reforms have given 300,000 school governors, unpaid volunteers, unprecedented powers to manage budgets, monitor the curriculum and appoint and dismiss staff.

The survey, of 150 heads in the London region, tried to discover why so many were leaving their posts early and why about 40 per cent of headships in the capital were not filled at the first attempt.

Ill-health, long hours, governors' government reforms and new inspections organised by the Office for Standards in Education were all given as reasons. The survey found that 53 per cent of heads felt their governors were not effective. Judith Judd

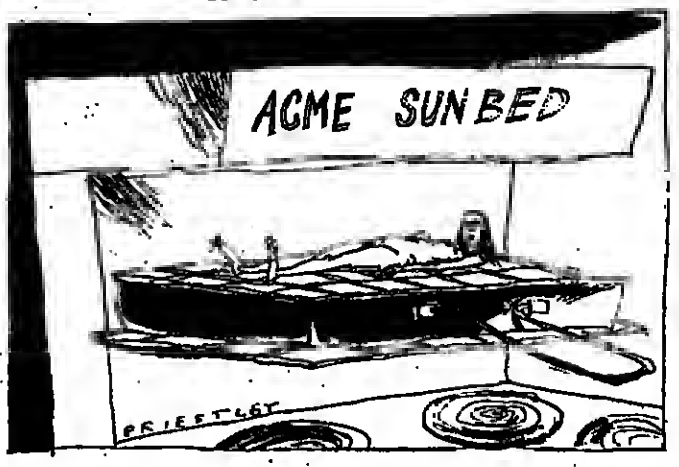
HEALTH

Sunbeds more dangerous than sun

Sunbeds emit three times as many ultra-violet "A" rays as the sun itself, putting those who use them at risk of skin cancer and skin damage, the Imperial Cancer Research Fund warned yesterday. But more women are suffering from what the charity dubs "tanorexia" – the dangerous desire to have a permanent tan and use sunbeds more than once a week.

An average 30-minute sunbed session will give you the equivalent UVA dose as a day basking on the beach. There are three types of ultra-violet rays – UVA, UVB and UVC. UVC is the strongest, but is prevented from reaching the earth by the ozone layer. UVB is the most damaging to the skin and is particularly linked to skin cancers. Until a few years ago doctors thought that UVA was safe. However there is now growing evidence that over-exposure to UVA may cause skin cancer – especially in its most serious form, melanoma.

It also affects the middle layer of the skin, or dermis, damaging elastin and collagen. Injury to this layer is responsible for lines and wrinkles and sagging skin. Glenda Cooper



MEDICINE

Sharks may hold cancer key

Sharks may provide a means of attacking cancer that is to be tested for the first time in patients later this year. An extract from shark tissue called squalamine, discovered in the stomach of the dog fish, is thought to prevent tumours from growing by cutting off their blood supply.

It was discovered by researchers working for Magainin Pharmaceuticals, a biotechnology company based in Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania, USA. Chairman Jay Moorin told *New Scientist* magazine: "We were looking for antibiotics in the shark tissue but instead we found a whole family of new compounds that stop cells from dividing."

The compounds are believed to act as a primitive immune system in the shark because they kill infectious microbes. Of the 18 compounds discovered, squalamine showed the most promise as an anti-cancer agent. Other substances have shown potential as treatments for AIDS.

Trials of the drug are expected to begin in the autumn in patients with brain or breast cancer, *New Scientist* said. The idea is to use it to prevent a relapse, rather than as a primary treatment.

MOTORING

Swedish security second to none

Swedish car manufacturer Volvo produces the most secure vehicles, according to a study of cars on British roads carried out for motor insurers Eagle Star Direct. The next most secure vehicles are Nissans, followed by Jaguars, Renaults, Mercedes and Fords.

The company said it was not giving details of manufacturers at the bottom of its list. "We recently revealed that the UK has the worst car crime in Europe and that Leeds is the worst city for crime, so we wanted a good news story this time," said a spokesman.

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مكتبة الأصل

A fair field full of art...

Clare Garner

A passion for Shakespeare plays inspired the painter Philip Sutton, RA, to spend two years depicting the bard and his work. The fruits of his labour of love will be exhibited in London next month.

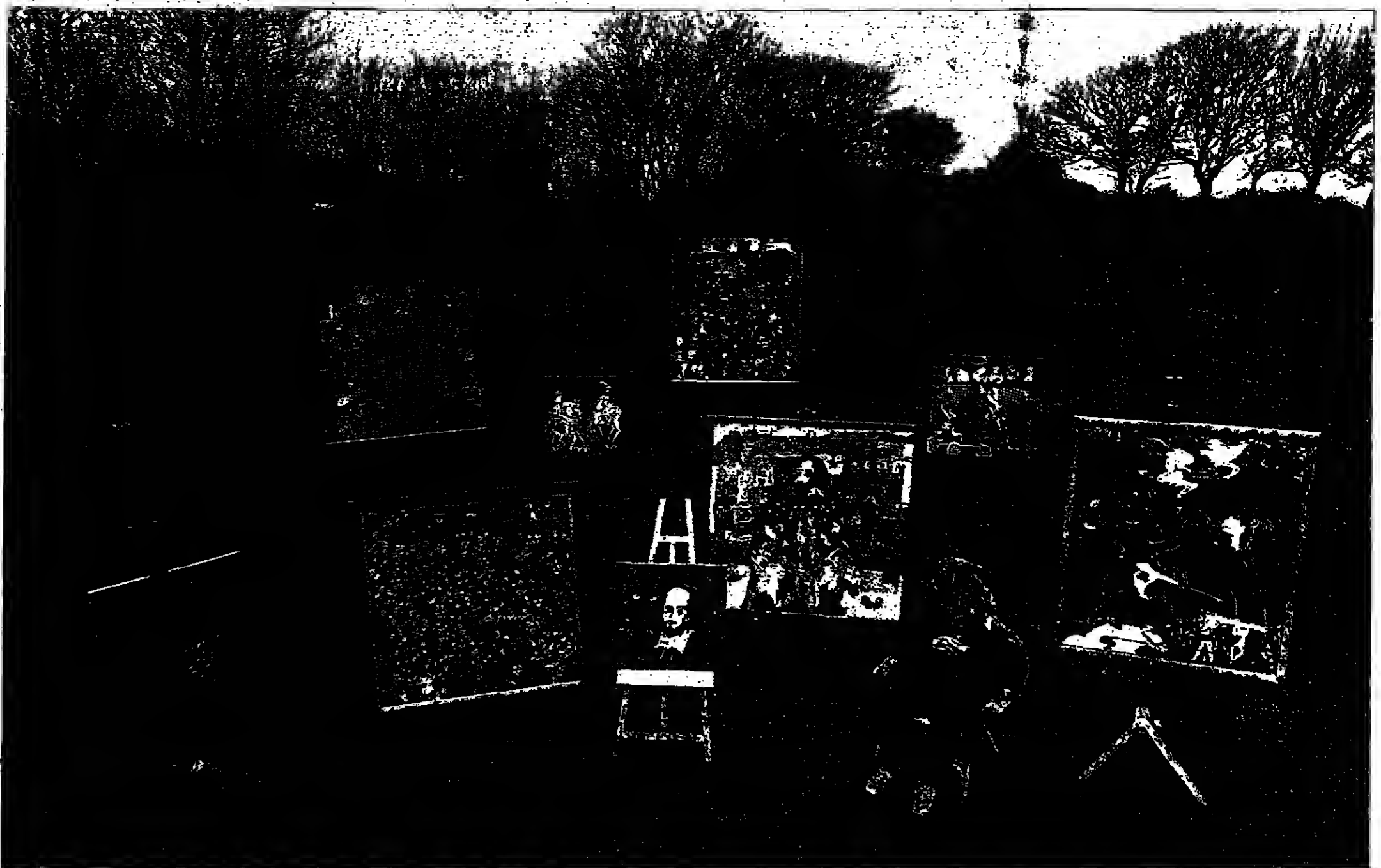
The exhibition, sponsored by Halifax, will start out at the Royal Academy of Arts and the Globe Theatre and then travel to Leeds' Royal Armouries Museum via Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of Shakespeare, who died 381 years ago yesterday.

Sutton, 69, began work in his studio in Manorbier, near Tenby, in Wales, with Henry V, Elizabethan England, France and the battle of Agincourt. "It has been a great revelation to me that I could translate that particular part of English history into something I could do myself," he said. "It combined the ideas I had many years ago of dressing things up - the theatre of life."

"One thing that struck me about Henry V marching his army through France," said Mr Sutton, explaining the presence of farm animals in his paintings, "was that 15,000 men went through the countryside, but farmers and people round about would have remained undisturbed, even though the action was taking place not far away."

Zoe Wanamaker, whose father, Sam, was responsible for resurrecting the Globe Theatre, summed up Mr Sutton's work: "Joy, energy and colour. I think that's the secret."

Sutton is the latest in a line of English painters inspired by Shakespeare, including William Hogarth, Joshua Reynolds and William Blake.



Labour of love: Philip Sutton displaying some of the paintings which were inspired by his passion for the works of Shakespeare

Photograph: Brian Harris

Yacoub cleared of negligence

Parents lose claim for damages over brain-damaged son

Jeremy Lawrence
Health Editor

A couple whose son was left brain damaged after a heart transplant carried out by Sir Magdi Yacoub lost their claim for damages yesterday after a judge ruled they had been properly warned of the risks.

Kevin and Linda Poynter said they would never have allowed the operation by Britain's leading heart transplant surgeon to go ahead had they had an inkling of what the outcome might be. They said they would have preferred to let their 16-month-old son Matthew die in peace, and only agreed to the transplant after being put under pressure by the medical team.

But Sir Maurice Drake, giving judgment in the High Court, rejected the claim that the doctors had been too zealous or had underplayed the risks. He found that the couple had not asked directly about the risk of brain damage and that it would have

been unlikely to have altered their decision if they had. Faced with the prospect of an 80 per cent chance of survival for their son through surgery, or certain death, most other parents faced with the same situation would also have consented.

"The outcome means Mr and Mrs Poynter, of Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, who were legally aided, must continue caring for Matthew, now aged 10, without financial help. He is profoundly brain damaged and needs round-the-clock care."

The couple are vegetarians and were resistant to the idea of a transplant. Mr Poynter, an osteopath, told the court: "The heart is not just a pump, it is part of the person, part of the mind, body and soul."

Matthew, who was born in August 1986, developed a heart condition in which the left ventricle became enlarged. He was seen at the local hospital in Stevenage by a cardiologist from Harefield who referred the

baby to the heart transplant centre. According to their solicitor, Tom Osborne, the couple were not opposed to orthodox medicine and gave Matthew the drugs he was prescribed. But they were against a transplant.

"However, the doctors at Harefield persuaded them that they had no rational case for opposing it. They were told that either the boy would die in a few days or he would live for two or three years a near normal life. They felt they had no choice."

The transplant was a success and the new heart still functions 10 years later. Matthew was the 30th child in the country to receive a heart transplant and one of the youngest. But he was so ill at the time of the operation that he suffered a cardiac arrest when given the anaesthetic and his heart was kept going with massage for 30 minutes until he could be attached to a heart-bypass machine. It is believed the brain damage occurred during this period.

He is the only one of the 177 children who have had heart transplants at Harefield who has suffered brain damage.

Sir Magdi told the court the risk was so small - less than 1 per cent - that he would not tell parents about it unless specifically asked.

Transplant surgeons yesterday agreed it was impractical, and could be unwise, to tell patients of every conceivable risk. Bob Johnson, kidney surgeon and chairman of the British Transplant Society, said: "We tell patients about the classical risks - of dying, of the organ being rejected, of side-effects of the immuno-suppressant drugs. But you can't go through every remote risk."

Afterwards, the couple's solicitor said that the £250,000 cost of the legal battle against Hillingdon Health Authority would have been better spent on healthcare for children like Matthew than in forcing the authority to respect parents' views.



Driven man: Sir Magdi outside the court yesterday

Brooding pioneer at the heart of Britain's transplant programme

For 17 years Professor Sir Magdi Yacoub has led the heart transplant programme in Britain. With his domed forehead and dark, brooding eyes peering out above a theatre mask he has become one of medicine's few, instantly recognisable faces, writes Jeremy Lawrence.

He operated on his first patient at Harefield hospital in January 1980, a few months after Sir Terence English had performed the first successful transplant in the United Kingdom at Papworth hospital, Cambridgeshire.

Although neither man courted publicity, the patrician Sir Terence, with his fondness for country walks, contrasted with the missionary style of Sir Magdi who seemed truly fulfilled only in the operating theatre.

In the early days, Sir Magdi's relentless demands on staff and resources provoked criticism from those who saw other specialties depleted. Now heart transplants are an accepted part of the surgical repertoire. More than 300 operations a year are performed in Britain and

Harefield is among the world's leading centres. Last year, Harefield completed its 2,000th heart transplant. Half the patients are still alive. Today, a new patient has a 60 per cent chance of surviving 10 years. Britain's longest survivor, Derrick Morris, aged 65, was Sir Magdi's third patient and has lived for 16 years since the operation.

Sir Magdi, 60, has given no hint that he is thinking of retiring. He still keeps a punishing schedule, working long hours, nights and weekends.

School expels boy of 9 for possessing cannabis

Judith Judd
Education Editor

A nine-year-old boy has been expelled from his primary school for alleged possession of cannabis.

The head of Whittings Hill primary school in Barnet, Maureen McGoldrick, suspended the boy, thought to be the youngest child to be expelled for alleged drug possession, after the police were called in. Later, she decided to exclude him permanently.

Staff called in the police when they found the boy carrying what they suspected to be a drug.

The boys' parents are reported to be angry that they were not present when police interviewed the boy who told his father he had found the substance in class.

They are also reported to have said that the boy told police he found the substance at home because he was frightened. A spokeswoman for New Scotland Yard confirmed that police had been called to the school on 21 March.

"Because the child was under the age of criminal responsibility no further action was taken in the matter of alleged possession of a controlled substance."

She said the case had been reported to their Youth and Community section because a

child was involved, but there had been no inquiry and the substance had not been analysed.

Anne Jarvis, chairman of Barnet council's education committee, said: "We are aware of the situation and we are monitoring it."

"The head teacher has a perfect right to exclude the child. It is a sensible precaution and we appreciate why she has taken it," she said. "The governing body will meet to decide whether to endorse her decision. If they do endorse it, the child's parents will have the right to appeal against their decision."

At this stage, she said the local authority's role was simply to advise the school. If the parents appealed, it would appoint an independent appeals panel to hear the case.

Recent surveys have shown that growing numbers of primary school children are taking drugs, but it is still comparatively rare.

A survey of 4000 11-13-year-olds in London, published in December, found that 96 per cent had never tried drugs. Thirty per cent of 14-16-year-olds had tried drugs.

A national study of 7700 from Edinburgh University published last year showed that 42 per cent of 15-16-year-olds had taken drugs, mainly cannabis.

St Hilda's blocks places for men

Judith Judd
Education Editor

St Hilda's, Oxford University's only remaining all-women's college, yesterday refused to back proposals to admit male dons.

The college, Alma Mater of Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, was forced to consider the change because its single-sex status means it does not have enough science fellows. While it is allowed to fill its own fellowships with women, it does not have the money to do so.

The change in statutes would allow it to share the cost of fellowships with the university and accept university appointments, four-fifths of which go to men.

At present the college has only four fellows in science compared with the ten it needs.

The college's governing body voted in favour of admitting male fellows by 17 to 10, but a

two-thirds majority is required to change the statutes and end a 100-year-old tradition.

Undergraduates and post-graduates at the college who had campaigned against the change were delighted with the result. In a recent poll, seven out of ten opposed the idea of male fellows.

Katherine Terrell, 23, a post-graduate who is president of the Middle Common Room, said: "We are extremely pleased. One of the main reasons we oppose the change is that the status of women within the university is not what we would like. Only 17 per cent of fellowships are held by women and in science it is only 5 per cent."

But she added: "We are a bit worried about the college's future. We urgently need to raise money for fellowships."

There is no plan to admit male undergraduates. Ms Terrell said students feared the presence of male dons would lead to co-education in the future.

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Judge blamed over Bridgewater trial

QC tells appeal of non-disclosure of key fingerprint evidence

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

The judge, prosecution and defence lawyers all failed to secure a fair trial for James Robinson, one of the four accused of the 1978 Carl Bridgewater murder, the Court of Appeal was told yesterday.

The failings included the non-disclosure by the Crown of key fingerprint evidence from the newspaper boy's bicycle, Lord Justice Roch and two other judges heard.

Patrick O'Connor QC was opening the case for Mr Robinson on the third day of the appeal by the Bridgewater Three and the late Patrick Molloy, whose "confession" led largely to the convictions the following year. "If Mr Molloy's appeal is properly recognised as a tale of

police deception and oppression, Mr Robinson's appeal is a tale of the failure of the legal system to secure him a fair trial and to satisfy... safeguards against injustice," the QC said.

The Crown has already conceded that material backing claims that police forced the confession, the so-called exhibit 54, from Mr Molloy, is enough to make Mr Robinson's murder conviction unsafe. But Mr O'Connor said that the structure of the case against Mr Robinson was riddled with faults anyway.

It would be appropriate for the court to recognise that his conviction would have been quashed quite independently of the "earthquake" of prejudice against him from exhibit 54, the QC said. "We submit that almost every aspect of the system let him down at trial."

Mr Robinson, 63, and cousins Michael Hickey, 35, and Vincent Hickey, 42, have been on unconditional bail since February, when it emerged that police had fabricated a statement to induce Mr Molloy to confess to being at Yew Tree Farm, Stourbridge, West Midlands, where the 13-year-old was killed with a shotgun as he stumbled upon a burglary.

Mr O'Connor told the judges that one of the most significant complaints against the trial judge was that he "wove exhibit 54, Molloy's confession, into his summing up in such a fashion as not only to fail to protect Mr Robinson from prejudice, but to exacerbate it."

The judge [Sir Maurice Drake, now retired] had also "neutralised" one of Mr Robinson's most important defence

points - the gross inconsistencies between the descriptions by eye-witnesses and Mr Robinson's shaven-headed appearance at the time of the crime.

Prosecution counsel had cross-examined him for nearly a day without regard to the proper rules, and failed to ensure the disclosure of fingerprint lifts from exhibit 23, the teenager's bicycle, which had undoubtedly been handled by one of the intruders, Mr O'Connor said.

Defence counsel seemed "patently not to have read documents provided on a plate", which contained the first accounts of important witnesses against Mr Robinson, had sat "without objection" though an improper cross-examination and failed to object to other inadmissible evidence.

The appeal continues.



Smoking: Emergency services tackle a brush fire on the Isle of Wight downs yesterday

Photograph: Patrick Eden

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Winds fan big fires in two counties

Matthew Brace

Large tracts of two counties were ablaze yesterday as hundreds of fire-fighters fought some of the largest fires seen for many years in Cornwall and on the Isle of Wight.

Fanned by high winds, walls of fire spread rapidly across bone-dry gorse and moor land. The fires are the latest in a series which have ignited the countryside during the current dry spell.

Fire crews in Cornwall fighting a huge gorse fire which devastated up to 1,000 acres between St Ives and St Just, said they saw flames moving faster than they could run.

The fire caused a huge pall of smoke which could be seen from several miles away and which one witness said looked like a nuclear bomb mushroom cloud. The main coast road between St Ives and Land's End was closed.

At the height of the blaze 120 firemen and support vehicles from all over the county fought the flames.

One fireman suffered superficial burns.

The affected area is one of

western Europe's most historically significant landscapes. The fire-hit heath with its ancient field systems is an area of outstanding natural beauty, with Sites of Special Scientific Interest and is part of the Ministry of Agriculture's environmentally sensitive area scheme.

It also has one of the largest concentrations of scheduled ancient monuments in western Europe, according to the local council.

The blaze in Cornwall is the third huge fire to hit the West Country in recent weeks. After it was brought under control fire investigators moved in to investigate how it started.

Meanwhile, more than 100 firefighters battled to control a huge fire which engulfed 200 acres of Brightstone Forest on the Isle of Wight.

All the Isle's full-time and part-time firefighters converged on the scene as the blaze spread through tinder dry scrub and copse land.

As the fire spread, the island's brigade, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, sent over four appliances, a water carrier and fire crews by ferry.

Beetles warm to heat of the forest



The buprestid beetles in Burma, home in on forest fires using an infrared pit organ which is exposed in flight.

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

Most animals flee forest fires - but buprestid beetles seek them out, swimming to them from distances of up to 30 miles away, because they need to lay their eggs in freshly burnt wood.

Scientists had always wondered exactly how the beetles, of the genus *Melanophila*, were able to detect conflagrations at such a distance. Now, a team at the Friedrich Wilhelms University in Bonn, Germany, has learnt how the beetles are able to function - as heat-seeking missiles. Two organs found in pits beneath their thorax are sensitive to precisely the infra-red wavelengths produced by burning woodlands.

Few animals are able to sense heat directly. Humans detect it

through its effect on the skin rather than as an innate sensation; thus chemicals or friction can generate the same "feeling" as warmth. Many snakes have pits near their nose which can detect the heat given off by warm-blooded prey. But the beetles' sensors operate differently. As the scientists found, the beetles "feel" heat as if it were pressure - though a welcome one. Snakes, on the other hand, have nerve fibres that act as true thermoreceptors, and literally "smell" heat.

In the experiments the German team detected activity in the nerves running from the pits in response to an infra-red lamp. Writing today, in the science journal *Nature*, the scientists said: "This provides the first physiological evidence of an insect infra-red receptor."

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Truckers bear a heavy load

French told to lift their blockade, but drivers stay gloomy

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

Joe Russell has been driving for 27 years. Fifteen hours a day, six days a week. Yesterday, taking an enforced break with some 1,500 other lorry drivers stuck in a mammoth log jam in Folkestone, he was wondering why he bothers.

Travelling down from Glasgow in his own "tractor", he was trying to take 16 tons of fish to France. The hold-up is wasting valuable hours: "I have got fresh fish and maybe 36 hours of fridge fuel. I've done nearly 20 hours and haven't even made it across the Channel yet."

The French fishermen's blockade of Calais, Boulogne and Dunkirk caused chaos for thousands of travellers. Mr Russell and his colleagues included. The fishermen said the

It's all free market now... the rules are easily broken

strike would continue until at least 10am today.

Various attempts were made throughout the day to try to put pressure on the striking fishermen to call off their blockade.

One such effort took place at three o'clock, yesterday, when rival cross-Channel ferry companies cast aside their differences to begin legal proceedings against the fishermen, who have dropped their nets outside the major harbours in protest at a new European Union ruling over mesh size of fishing nets.

As far as Mr Russell is concerned, the blockade is just the latest in a series of vexatious lorry drivers have suffered since the ban of regulations in the 1980s which spawned myriad trucking firms. "It's all free-market now. There are rules - but they are easily broken. Not by me, mind," says Mr Russell. "You get cashiers, work that is completely off the company books. You get trip money, a flat fee to deliver goods with no questions asked - all that means is that you get people working all the time without concern for their health. You're supposed to



Game plan: Stranded truckers playing football on the M20 yesterday. Most are resigned (right) to delays

Photographs: Andrew Buurman/AP

have a tachograph that tells inspectors what you have been up to. But things are easily lost or mislaid. People out there are getting away with murder."

Mr Russell, who is not a member of any union, thinks Britain is unlikely to see any French-style revolts against the political establishment. "We do not stick together. In France the police turn a blind eye because they are all in the same union."

Mooney, as always, provides a convenient answer. "On a good week, aye, I might get £3,000 of work in. But that's on-stop work and probably only works out at £1 for every mile driven. Then you've got your overheads - I spend £4,000 on fuel every month."

Mr Russell, who left school at 15 and grew up in Chryston, a suburb of Glasgow, said: "I wouldn't advise anyone to go into trucking now. I left Glasgow at 8am yesterday, I am supposed to be in Boulogne, then I go to Belgium. I am doing 3,500 miles a week. That's six days a week." he says. "I work a 15-hour day. That's nine hours' driving, two hours' loading, two hours' eating and two hours' emptying the trailer."

To add to his burden he and other lorry drivers face further delays and disruption next month if French transport unions carry out their threats to strike over pension pay-outs.

The move comes after negotiations between Bernard Pons, the French transport minister and the drivers' unions broke down earlier this month. The unions are planning a series of strikes in France beginning on 5 May.

Mr Russell has little faith in the British authorities' ability to resolve the mess. The Freight Transport Association delivered an over-sized invoice yesterday for 800th francs (£100n) for compensation resulting from last November's French truckers blockade to the French Embassy in London.

The bill was presented to officials by the FTA director general David Greco who also delivered a letter to French President Jacques Chirac calling on him to "use all the powers available to you to prevent a re-

currence of these blockades". Stranded on the cold, hard shoulder at Folkestone, surrounded by fellow drivers running low on fuel, food, money and patience, symbolic demonstrations in London are of little

consequence to Mr Russell. He has to deal with being his own boss and the attendant hassle. On the Continent, there is a plethora of restrictions to keep up with: road tax to pay in Belgium; tolls in France; and

lorry-free times on many roads during the weekend.

"I started on my own five years ago when I brought my tractor for £55,000. If I'd known how hard it was going to be, I wouldn't have bothered."



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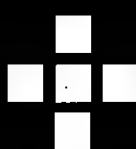
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Fishermen firm on keeping body and sole alive

The fishing dispute blocking channel ports yesterday concerns 220 small French boats which make a living from catching sole and other fish in the channel and western approaches.

The fishermen have, somewhat belatedly, taken fight at a European Union directive, agreed by France and other European governments, which would increase the minimum mesh size of their nets.

This is part of an EU programme of conservation, applying to all EU fleets, intended to reduce the catching of young fish and lessen the pressure on disappearing stocks.

The fishermen have three complaints about the new nets. They protest that they will cost a lot to buy - about £20,000 per boat. They fear they will reduce the weight of their catches. Most of all, they complain that the nets will spare precisely the young, tender, medium-sized sole which are prized by French cooks and command the highest prices at market.

Attempts were being made last night to arrange a meeting between the fishermen's leaders and the French agriculture and fisheries minister, Philippe

John Lichfield on the question of net size and catches that has ignited the dispute

Vasseur. The minister said this was a "highly technical" matter but he was ready to meet the fishermen at any time to try to find a solution.

While this was taking place, a spokeswoman for P&O Ferries in England said the ferry companies had been granted permission by the French courts to serve injunctions on 15 fishermen blockading Calais.

"The injunctions should be served within the next few hours by French civil servants on those named individuals. If they have not moved within one hour of receiving the injunctions, they will be liable for fines of 10,000 francs (£1,100) per person per hour that they remain blocking the port."

"We are very hopeful this will bring an end to the blockade. If the fishermen do not move after the injunctions have been served, they can remain in place but the fines will mount up."

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news

Environment watchdog loses its teeth

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

Scotland's new environmental watchdog is so strapped for cash that it will not be able to monitor for disasters like the Braer oil spillage or a nuclear leak from a submarine in Holy Loch.

The agency is facing a 10 per cent cut in funding and a cash crisis because it suddenly finds itself unable to recover VAT – unlike its larger counterpart covering England and Wales.

At a meeting last week, the main board of the Government's Scottish Environment Protection Agency, which came into being last year, ordered its three area offices to make cuts to fill the £3m hole which has opened in its £28m budget.

The eastern area is worst affected, with its emergency out-of-hours service dropped. If a severe pollution incident happens on a loch or river at night or over the weekend, the agency will not be informed until the next working day begins.

The move has angered the River Tweed Commission which oversees a salmon fishing industry worth £13m a year to the Borders' economy. Judith Nicol of the Commission said: "To have the agency responsible for river pollution available only during office hours surely cannot be right."

Staff training and monitoring of pollution of land, water and air is being cut back in all three areas and the agency is concerned that it may be unable to meet some of its legal obligations.

While the management has promised not to cut any of the 650 jobs for the time being, there is a freeze on filling any

A spokeswoman said monitoring of radioactivity in the waters of Holy Loch, where there was a US nuclear submarine

With no money, the agency is being forced to break the law

vacancies. It also regulates waste-dumping and radioactive emissions from Scotland's nuclear plants.

base, would cease. All plans to issue air pollution monitoring contracts were being scrapped. Tricia Bradley, a member of

the agency's West Region Board and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' director in south-west Scotland, said: "In effect, they are being forced to break the law because they haven't got the money to meet their commitments."

SEPA's main board chairman Professor William Timmean said the situation was "daft". South of the border the Government's new Environment Agency covering England and Wales was able to recover VAT. Furthermore, the Scottish agency's predecessor organisations like local councils and river purification boards had been able to recover VAT.

However, Mike Thompson of Customs & Excise said SEPA "simply doesn't qualify" because it is a quango receiving its funding from the Scottish Office. He said the Treasury felt that allowing it to recover VAT would open the floodgates for others.

But the Environment Agency in England and Wales is not considered to be a quango, even though it has very similar functions and duties to its smaller Scottish sister. The larger organisation expects to reclaim over £50m VAT this year from the Treasury.

Dr Richard Dixon, head of research at Friends of the Earth Scotland, called on the Government to address the funding crisis. "Instead of carrying forward its obligation to improve the Scottish environment, the agency is facing an unfair burden which means it is having to cut back its activities," he said.

Stunning development: devastating weapons that do not kill

Christopher Bellamy on science that makes death unnecessary

"Phasers on stun..."

The dream of being able to give an order like *Star Trek's* Captain Kirk – immobilise your opponent without killing or maiming – has long been part of science fiction and in recent years military scientists, particularly in the US, have been working to turn it into reality.

But it is all baloney, according to a report by Bradford University's Peace Studies department, published this week.

Developments in weapons technology have made it possible, in theory, to fight an entire war without anyone being killed. But in practice, say Dr Nick Lewer and Dr Steven Schofield, non-lethal weapons are just as likely to be used to overpower resistance in combination with the more conventional, lethal type, enhancing the latter's effectiveness.

The study, *Non-Lethal Weapons: A Fatal Attraction?* argues that while non-lethal weapons could be useful in "humanitarian intervention" – peacekeeping operations, such as in Bosnia – there is an urgent need for serious debate to determine proper ground rules for their use.

Non-lethal – or "less-than-lethal" – weapons have been around for hundreds of years. The Aztecs of central America, who needed live prisoners to sacrifice, had weapons designed to wound, not to kill.

More recently a number of non-lethal weapons have been in widespread use for the past 30 years. The most widely used are rubber or plastic bullets and CS gas, and also stun grenades.

In the last few years US companies have developed even more exotic non-lethal weapons including sticky foam and rubber balls to impede movement, sticky nets and chemical compounds to make fuel useless or to change the composition of roads. Low-frequency sound will cause a person's insides to vibrate, causing nausea and dizziness, but no permanent damage.

Other weapons, while "non-lethal", are widely detested – notably laser weapons – which can blind soldiers, especially those peering through optical instruments. Weapons designed



Infrasound
A tuned beam of low-frequency, high-amplitude sound, produced by high-powered acoustic generators, sets up vibrations that can resonate in body cavities, causing disturbance of bodily organs, blurred vision and nausea, but no permanent damage.

Entanglers
A sticky net, which traps people or vehicles. Can be vehicle-mounted or hand-held.

Anti-traction
Use of super-lubricants to make surfaces slippery, or polymer adhesives to act as superglue to freeze equipment or stick it to the ground.

Foam
Probably vehicle-mounted. Dense foam can be used to block gates, doorways etc. Sticky foam can be used to trap people.

specifically to blind people were recently banned by international treaty, although those designed to smash optical instruments – which might blind people as a side-effect – were not.

A further complication is that, ironically, current international law permits only weapons designed primarily to kill, but prohibits those designed primarily to wound or disable.

Britain's Defence Evaluation and Research Agency is far more sceptical about non-lethal weapons, pointing out that if peacekeeping troops use them, the local parties are likely to respond with the traditional Kalashnikov. However, in difficult situations where hostages are taken, or where the identity of attackers is unclear, they may be of some limited use.

The Bradford authors said "research and development of new weapons is proceeding apace, in what amounts to an almost unseen arms race. Existing weapons conventions may be undermined as the arms industry throws up inventions that belonged in the realms of science fiction when those treaties were signed. Some allegedly non-lethal weapons rely on chemical and biological agents and are already snapping

at the heels of international law". The Bradford authors said further dangers include the use of non-lethal weapons for domestic repression – the use of electric stun batons as torture weapons is well documented and contemporary conflicts often blur the line between police and military operations.

The authors called for non-lethal weapons to be assessed, not as benign innovations but as just another type of weapon, capable of being used for good or ill. "War", as Clausewitz said, "is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will." Lethal or non-lethal, it remains an act of force.

Non-Lethal Weapons: A Fatal Attraction? Dr Nick Lewer and Dr Steven Schofield; Zed Books, London, 1997; paperback £12.95.

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MoD admits Gulf War pesticides error

Nicholas Schoon

The Ministry of Defence did not check with the Government's own pesticide experts before using large quantities of dangerous organophosphate (OP) pesticides in the Gulf War.

The admission comes in a letter this week from junior agriculture minister Angela

Browning to Liberal Democrat Paul Tyler.

More than 1,000 British servicemen claim they are suffering a variety of chronic and debilitating illnesses as a result of serving in the Gulf War more than six years ago. The widespread use of OP pesticides, also believed to have made many sheep farmers se-

riously ill, is one possible cause.

Mrs Browning's letter says: "You asked whether the Ministry of Defence had contacted this department at the time of the Gulf War to obtain advice on the use of OP pesticides. We have checked the position carefully and I can confirm that no such approach was made."

Mr Tyler, MP for North

Cornwall and now the Liberal Democrat's candidate in the constituency, said yesterday: "It is mind boggling that one government ministry which was going to be responsible for the use of OPs never thought to ask questions about safety measures." Gulf veterans had "every reason to feel aggrieved", he said.

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Liverpool aim to keep pride intact

Although the Graeme Souness era is less than fondly remembered at Anfield, a European night during his term as manager provides an inspiring precedent for Liverpool as they strive against overwhelming odds to reach the Cup-Winners' Cup final tonight.

With Roy Evans' side trailing 3-0 to Paris St-Germain after the first leg of the semi-final, history shows that even the Liverpool of Shankly, Paisley and Fagan never overturned such arrears in Continental competition. When David "Supersub" Fairclough completed an epic fightback against St Etienne en route to the Champions' Cup 20 years ago, the French lead had been only 1-0.

Yet in 1991, Auxerre, leading 2-0, came to Merseyside to complete formalities in the UEFA Cup and returned to France shell-shocked. Liverpool scored in four minutes and quickly levelled the aggregate score. Seven minutes from the end Mark Walters ensured that they made up a two-goal deficit for the first time ever.

That, as Evans will recall from his role as coach, was with a transitional team who were struggling against all manner of lower-division visitors. It was also in a half-empty stadium. Tonight, PSG face a vastly superior Liverpool line-up - one with something to prove now that the Premiership appears to have slipped away - and Anfield will be packed.

The strategy is sure to be similar: try to score early and see whether PSG can take the heat. The Liverpool manager has indicated that he will play Robbie Fowler, Stan Collymore and Patrick Bergner together for the first time this season. Evans may also switch from a defensive trio plus wing-backs to a flat back four in the belief that the French might not relish a more "British" approach.

"It's a tall order but we must believe we can do it," Evans said

Phil Shaw on the Herculean task facing Roy Evans' team tonight

yesterday. "If we can get an early goal, we can get them on the run. If you don't believe you don't achieve."

"Normally you try to play a patient game in Europe, but we must set the tempo. The bottom line is that we've got to play fantastically and they'll have to be poor if we're to win."

Steve Harkness and Bjorn Tore Kvarme are respectively injured and ineligible, leaving Evans to choose replacements from Phil Babb, Neil Ruddock, Rob Jones and Dominic Matteo. Michael Thomas (knee) and Matteo (hip) face late fitness tests.

The error-ridden David James is set to retain his place - Liverpool have no plausible alternative keeper - knowing that whatever miracles are mustered at the opposite end, one slip could give PSG an away goal and almost certainly the tie.

For the Parisians, who have perhaps even greater expectations of the 21-year-old striker Jerome LeRoi than Anfield has of Fowler, left-back Didier Domi is the only casualty. Their Brazilian manager, Ricardo, anticipates a "much more aggressive" Liverpool than at Parc des Princes. If that proved the case, he added, it would merely create more space for his team to counter-attack.

In the other Cup-Winners' Cup semi-final tonight Fiorentina and Barcelona start at 1-1 in Italy. Fiorentina will be without the suspended Argentinian striker Gabriel Batistuta, who scored their equaliser in the first leg. For Barcelona the former Tottenham midfielder player George Popescu is suspended.

Le Saux's resolve

ALAN NIXON

Graeme Le Saux has refused to commit himself to Blackburn Rovers despite pressure from the club's owner, Jack Walker, to keep the England left-back at Ewood Park next season.

Le Saux made a surprise return to the Rovers side after being dropped and went on to score in Tuesday night's win over Sheffield Wednesday.

He was not prepared to rule out a move in the summer, however, saying: "All I want to do is make the most of my career in the time I've got available. I've not made my decision public yet, but everybody is aware of the problems. I don't want other things to affect my game."

He added: "It would be unprofessional to say anything until this matter is resolved with the club. You had better ask the people in charge about that."

Le Saux said that his "troubles" had affected his performance for the past few months when his club form has dipped. "This has been going on for a long time," he said. "It's a situation that had got the better of me. It's been serious enough to put me off my game. But I don't want a reputation as a problem player. I was trying to cope with all that was troubling me as best I could, but it wasn't working."

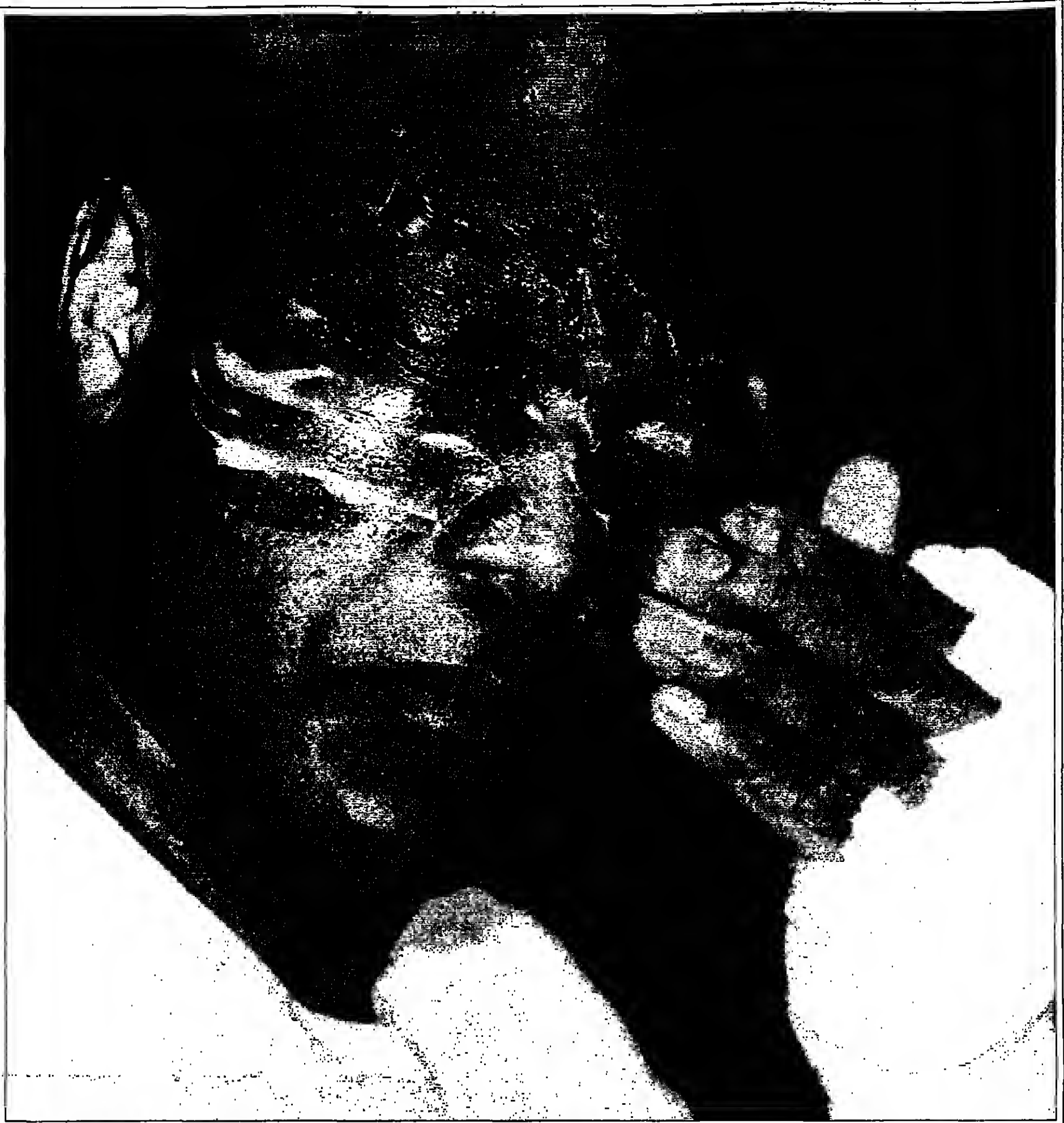
Walker is determined to keep Le Saux and certainly will not let him go cheaply. However, his decision to recall the Channel Islander has caused more friction with team-mate Jason Wilcox. The left-winger would not sit on the bench in midweek after being dropped and is poised to ask for a transfer.

Blackburn's troubles have been exacerbated by an injury to the striker Chris Sutton, who suffered a hamstring strain and was substituted at half-time during Tuesday's match.

The Nottingham Forest caretaker manager, Stuart Pearce, is to remain at the City Ground next season as a player even if the club are relegated. However, he is not prepared to say whether he will remain as manager, although he admits he has made a decision about his future.

"I will certainly be here as a player next season as I have a three-year contract to honour," Pearce said. "I have also made my mind up as regards whether I want to remain as a manager but I am not ready to reveal what my thoughts are."

Brighton's plans to play their home games at the new stadium in Hove next season could be put in jeopardy as the venue does not at present meet the League's criteria to stage matches.



Former world heavyweight champion George Foreman greases up for a work-out in training for Saturday's fight against Lou Savarese in Atlantic City

Photograph: AP

Old pals prepare for business in hand

Golf

ANDY FARRELL reports from Madrid

Once they had nothing more on their minds than trying to be the Tiger Woods of the day, now if they resemble a couple of 40-plus chief executives out for a day's golf, that is exactly what they are, although it helps to be Seve Ballesteros and Greg Norman when it comes to

teeing up in the Peugeot Spanish Open.

Ballesteros is the boss of the event's promoters, Arnie Corner, and asked Norman, head of the rapidly expanding Great White Shark Inc. to return to Madrid for the first time in 15 years as a special favour. The quid pro quo is that the Spaniard will play in Norman's Holden Classic in Australia during the winter.

"After 21 years of playing the

game together, it is right that we should help each other out," the Australian said. "It is like Jack [Nicklaus] inviting Arnie [Palmer] to the Memorial, and Arnie inviting Jack to his tournament at Bay Hill."

Norman was more concerned about attending his first bullfight last night than the fact that Tom Lehman had ended his record run of 96 weeks as the world No.1. "I've been up there a long time," Norman said. "The best

player right now is Tiger Woods. Like anything, golf needs young blood and new talent to come through. America was crying out for someone like Tiger. He has topped the level for everyone."

Woods is only ranked at No.5, while Norman can regain the top spot by finishing in the top ten here.

Like Norman, Ballesteros was long gone before Woods was crowned at Augusta and he has turned to the Australian's

old coach, and Woods's mentor, Butch Harmon, in the hope of making his first cut of the season. "If one doctor cannot help, you try another," Seve said. He has had more second opinions than he has played rounds recently.

As the European captain, Ryder Cup matters are also on Seve's mind. He knows who he wants as a No.2 but he cannot yet name him, saying only that the candidate can speak both

English and Spanish. Next week, he heads for Valderrama to help set up the course. "There will be fairway for 260 yards and then only rough," is his plan to combat Woods. He will not decide on whether to be a playing captain until he picks his two wild cards on 31 August, on which subject he repeated "there are no guarantees for anyone". For the record, Norman thinks America will win.

Davies and Thomas out of final line-ups

Rugby Union

Jonathan Davies and Arwel Thomas, who contested the Wales No.10 shirt this season, will both be missing from their clubs' starting line-ups in Saturday's Swales Cup final - the last match to be held at Cardiff Arms Park before it is demolished.

Davies, who is still recovering from a dead leg and has played little rugby during the last month, will be confined to the "replacement" bench as Cardiff opt for the 20-year-old Lee Jarvis at outside-half.

Thomas, who played his first game in two months for Swansea on Saturday, will make way for Aled Williams, after

feeling some reaction to a knee ligament injury.

Twickenham yesterday confirmed that clubs outside England's top two divisions will not lose money following the withdrawal of Courage's sponsorship of the entire league system. The Rugby Football Union has pledged to "at the minimum, match the levels of this season".

Tougher qualifications in line for trials

Equestrianism

GENEVIEVE MURPHY

Hugh Thomas, director of the Mitsubishi Badminton Horse Trials which run from 7 to 11 May, anticipates tougher qualifications for next year's event after receiving an unprecedented number of entries.

This year made the controversial decision to limit overseas countries to five horses, but, even so, still has 45 on the waiting list. There has since been resentment against Blyth Tait, New Zealand's Olympic champion, for his fairly mild assertion that spectators would rather see the top riders with two horses than "Samantha

Cipotty-Clop" with one. Three British riders - Karen Dixon, Leslie Law and Ian Stark - are due to ride two horses apiece. Both Andrew Nicholson of New Zealand and Bruce Davidson of the United States have two horses listed, but they will only ride their second horses if one of their countrymen drop out.

FOOTBALL RESULTS

Yesterday
NON-INSURANCE COMBINATION First Division: Arsenal 3, Ipswich 0; Bournemouth 0, Cardiff 0; Millwall 0, Luton 1; Walsley 1, Scunthorpe 2.
WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY (Turin): Italy 2, England 0.
Tuesday
UEFA Cup Semi-final second leg: Arsenal 1, Lazio 0; Tottenham 0, Rangers 2; Schalke 0, Lazio 1; Juventus 0, Tottenham 2.
FA Cup Semi-final replay: Chelsea 0, Millwall 0.
Football League First Division: Arsenal 1, Tottenham 0; Liverpool 1, Manchester United 0; Everton 0, Manchester City 0; Blackburn 0, Newcastle 0; Derby 0, Nottingham Forest 0; Sheffield Wednesday 0, Huddersfield 0; Preston 0, Wigan 0; Burnley 0, Reading 0; Luton 0, Nottm Forest 0; Millwall 0, Walsley 0; Scunthorpe 0, Middlesbrough 0; Charlton 0, Barnsley 0; Sheffield United 0, Sheffield Wednesday 0; Bournemouth 0, Cardiff 0; Millwall 0, Luton 0; Walsley 0, Scunthorpe 0; Middlesbrough 0, Charlton 0; Barnsley 0, Sheffield United 0; Sheffield Wednesday 0, Bournemouth 0; Cardiff 0, Millwall 0; Luton 0, Walsley 0; Scunthorpe 0, Middlesbrough 0; Charlton 0, Barnsley 0; Sheffield United 0, Sheffield Wednesday 0; Bournemouth 0, Cardiff 0; Millwall 0, Luton 0; Walsley 0, Scunthorpe 0; Middlesbrough 0, Charlton 0; Barnsley 0, Sheffield United 0; Sheffield Wednesday 0, Bournemouth 0; Cardiff 0, Millwall 0; Luton 0, Walsley 0; Scunthorpe 0, Middlesbrough 0; Charlton 0, Barnsley 0; Sheffield United 0, Sheffield Wednesday 0; 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election '97

Taxes: the big unanswered question

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

With just one week to go before polling day, the one big question that remains unanswered is: What will happen to taxes under Tony Blair or John Major?

The hunt answer is that they can be expected to go up. The Treasury Red Book, giving forecasts of tax burden, shows a steady increase up to 2002 – providing the official cover for both parties to put taxes up.

At the start of the campaign, *The Independent* posed a number of critical questions that would need to be answered, and most of them have been answered, insofar as any politician ever answers straight questions.

Would Labour take Britain into a single currency? Of course it would, though only after the same "triple-lock" safety process offered by the Tories: of Cabinet, Parliament and referendum approval.

Would Mr Ashdown keep Mr Blair in power without proportional representation? There has been no precise answer to that, though it has not been pressed too hard.

But the big remaining question is on tax – and neither the Conservatives nor Labour will give a hard answer on that – probably because most politicians and City analysts expect taxes to go up, whatever happens, and whoever wins.

While Labour has made no secret of its plans for a windfall tax on the privatised utilities, there are undoubtedly hidden agendas on both sides of the political divide. Yesterday, Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, again concentrated fire on the Tories' historical weakness for increasing VAT.

"If the Conservatives win again," he told an election press conference, "nothing will stop them increasing VAT on fuel to 17.5 per cent and extending VAT further."

John Major has shown a marked reluctance to answer questions about VAT. When *The Independent* repeatedly asked him whether he would give a commitment not to increase the rate or extend the VAT base at the start of the campaign, the Conservative leader repeatedly dodged the question.

He said: "I cannot conceive, except in the most exceptional circumstances that cannot be foreseen at the moment, that we would need to increase gener-

Q What will happen to taxes under Blair or Major?

Q If things go badly, would the Tories take us out of Europe?

Q Will Blair back voting reform if he wins?

Q Would Labour take Britain into a single currency?

Q Will the parties spend more on schools – and who loses?

Q Would Ashdown keep Blair in power without PR?

Q Can Labour match the Tory pledge on NHS cash?

Q What do the parties mean by radical reform of welfare?



Revenge of the greys: The Labour Party drew attention to John Major's record of tax rises by parading 22 men in masks through Birmingham city centre yesterday

Photograph: Mike Sewell

al tax levels in the next Parliament, given our public expenditure plans and the outlook for the economy.

"So I think that is a perfectly clear answer to the points you have made about value-added tax and subject to quite unexpected events I'd expect that to remain the situation."

Asked for the same pledge in the 1992 election campaign, Mr Major told *The Independent*: "We have no plans and no need to extend the scope of VAT."

Labour has said firmly that it will not extend the base of VAT to basic essentials – food, children's clothes, books and newspapers and public transport fares – and that it will reduce the rate of VAT on domestic power and fuel bills to 5 per cent, the lowest level now allowed under European law.

Mr Brown and Mr Blair have also made commitments that they will not increase basic 23 per cent and 40 per cent rates of income tax during the lifetime of the new parliament.

But there is no Labour commitment on the tax allowances or the thresholds at which income tax is paid, although Mr Blair has said he would like to reduce the tax burden on the average family.

Only the Liberal Democrats have marked themselves out as

the party of tax and spend, with their promise to increase the basic rate of income tax by a penny in the pound to fund more speeding on education and a new higher rate band of 50p for those on taxable income in excess of £100,000.

Their plans would mean that half of the 25 million income taxpayers would be worse off, but even they misleadingly said their plans to take 500,000 low-pay taxpayers out of income tax would reduce tax "for 99.5 per cent of all income taxpayers."

Only those who know him very well will know whether Ms Dineen has captured the essence of Mr Blair. However, in asking why he isn't a Tory, she elicited a response that forms the essence of his philosophy: that there is nothing wrong with ambition and success, but that your achievements are hollow if you have ignored the disadvantaged in society on the way.

The film includes footage of Mr Blair making tea in the kitchen of his home in Islington, north London, and has limited shots of him talking to his three children. At one point, he grins and warns them: "Lots of homework for you. Wait until David Blunkett gets hold of you!"

Peter Mandelson, Labour's campaign manager, said he hoped the broadcast would

help to cut through some of the cynicism felt towards politicians in general. "It is about Blair the man," he said. "It is not gimmicky or flashy and it has no artifice. It has no varnish. It is almost raw in its treatment of Tony Blair. You could say, we have a great asset here and let's show him off."

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Hamilton strikes at Bell with help of fax machine

Jojo Moyes

The battle between Neil Hamilton and his rival for the Cheshire seat of Tatton, Martin Bell, has moved from the realm of the campaign to the realm of the legal system.

Mr Bell was last week forced to re-submit his nomination papers last week. Mr Hamilton and his agent, Peter McDowell, have issued legal threats both in person and via Mr Hamilton's solicitors, Crookers. They have also made numerous complaints about his campaign – including the "over-enthusiastic" sifting of Mr Bell's posters.

"They're trying to demoralise us," said a spokesman for Mr Bell's office. "It's all done as a distraction because they know that our campaign has been set up from scratch. We've had to respond to everything."

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A letter received soon after from Mr Hamilton's solicitors threatens further action over Mr Bell's campaign statement. "The remark that you will 'do all [you] can to remove the stain

of corruption from public life' ... is a clear accusation that Mr Hamilton is corrupt, an accusation the gravity of which is redoubled in the context of an election campaign," the letter says. It concludes: "Our client reserves his right to commence proceedings against you claiming damages for libel following the publication of the report by Sir Gordon Downey. If, as is confidently expected, the report clears our client of the charges of corruption, the damages he will be seeking will be very substantial indeed."

Mr Hamilton himself sent one three-page letter to Mr Bell accusing him of breaching his word not to describe himself as an "anti-corruption" candidate and to run a "decent and dignified" campaign. He adds: "Will you accept that your own role in this election is but an extension of *The Guardian's* campaign against me?"

Letters from Mr McDowell, Mr Hamilton's agent, suggest that one way or another, the Battle of Knutsford Heath is not yet over. He has complained that Mr Bell's supporters are being "over-enthusiastic" in putting up posters for their man. "I think you should know that Knutsford's large and little Heath's [sic] are private property, owned by Randall Brooks," Mr McDowell states in one.

"Randall has given me permission for 'Hamilton' posters. He will definitely not be allowing 'Bell' posters."

Labour film asks: Just why aren't you a Tory, Mr Blair?

Steve Boggan

Tonight, Tony Blair will be posed the question many old Labour supporters have wanted to ask him for some time: "Why aren't you a Tory?"

The question will be asked during Labour's latest election broadcast, filmed by Molly Dineen, the celebrated documentary maker, in the party's latest attempt to market Mr Blair as a better leader than John Major.

In a deliberately raw and frank 10-minute film, Ms Dineen tries to capture the essence of Tony Blair in a fly-on-the-wall style that contrasts markedly with the famously slick Hugh Hudson packaging of Neil Kinnock in 1987.

Ms Dineen was given access to Mr Blair for about five weeks, filming him at home with his children, campaigning, playing tennis and football and travelling by car and train to engagements.

The overall impression is of a young family-man desperate to get across the message that not all politicians are the same, that Britain can change and that he is the man to make it happen.

Ms Dineen said she approached Labour to make the film, rather than the other way round, and she insisted there had been no interference from the party, although she knew it would be used as an election broadcast and would, therefore, have to conform to a "broad menu".

"I went into this feeling impressed by Blair and I came out feeling impressed," she said at a preview yesterday. "I liked him very much. I especially think he is wonderful, really wonderful with his kids. I was able to film them a little, but, as a parent, he didn't want me to feature them too much. That would make them fair game."

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THE HURRIED VOTER'S GUIDE

THE CAMPAIGN

Labour's campaign day began in a TV studio with the promise of a "people's lottery" to channel money into education and health. Celebrities were on hand to endorse the party's ideas for diverting £1bn from the National Lottery Wednesday draw into health and education.

Tony Blair stayed in the news with the release of the Party Election Broadcast anticipated as "Blair: The Movie", made by the documentary maker Molly Dineen. The film will be shown on television tonight.

The Liberal Democrats marked the anniversary of the birth of William Shakespeare by pledging £1.75bn over the next five years for school books. The party's policy would amount to an extra £16,000 a year for a typical primary school and £110,000 a year for a secondary school, they said.

The Conservatives began the day with an attack on Labour's plans for pensioners, saying that measures such as the windfall tax and the removal of tax relief on private health insurance would hurt the old most.

Later, John Major was in Scotland while Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, made waves in London by leaking a copy of Labour's "war book" – the plan for the election campaign.

Labour said the book was out-of-date and contained nothing damaging to their cause.

KEY ARGUMENTS

John Major warned voters in Aberdeen of the dangers of Scottish devolution under Labour. "Look in my eye and know this: I will always deal fair and true by this great nation," he told them.

Labour's lottery plans were an admission that their sums did not add up, the Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, said. "They are falling around looking for money to pay for commitments they have been talking about. It is an illustration of Labour's black hole," he said.

David Steel, the Liberal Democrat elder statesman, was asked on ITN's lunchtime news about his attitude to drugs. "Politicians are not in the best position to pontificate on this subject of drugs. It is largely a generational problem," he said.

Peter Mandelson, Labour's campaign manager, introduced their Party Election Broadcast about Tony Blair with the words: "This is not Blair the movie, this is Blair the man." In the film, Mr Blair says that as a boy he had never wanted to be a politician.

"I thought that politicians were complete pains in the backside," Mr Blair said.

"My ambition as a lad was to play football for Newcastle United."

GOOD DAY

It was Jack Cunningham who organised Labour's campaign in 1992. He was let out of his kennel for the first time during the current campaign yesterday to help launch Labour's plans for the National Lottery.

Mr Cunningham, shadow national heritage secretary, used the morning press conference to announce: "I am very pleased that Tony Blair is here to announce a major initiative to give more of the people's money back to them."

Paddy Ashdown's tactic of "blowing off the agenda" when he visited Newbury. Local Liberal Democrat MP David Bannister supports the building of a controversial bypass through four sites of special scientific interest and two historic battlefields, and Mr Ashdown was talked by protesters who said Mr Bannister's view conflicted with party policy. Mr Ashdown said: "Liberal Democrats have a firm view and we stick to it."

ONE TO REMEMBER

Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security, launching an appeal to win the "grey vote", said a Conservative government would "guarantee the basic pension, go on giving more to frail and less well-off pensioners and continue to protect the living standards of pensioners". Other proposals included an insurance scheme to fund residential care for the elderly and the expansion of respite care.

BAD DAY

Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland, said in a press conference with John Major: "Independence would be a disaster for Scotland. Labour's dog's breakfast of a proposal and its instability would be the top of a slippery slope which would end in an independent socialist republic and a flight of capital."

THE OTHER PARTIES

The Ulster Unionists suffered a blow when Jim Kilpatrick announced that he was defecting to the Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party. He said he had switched because the UUP had gone soft on the union and was prepared to re-negotiate Northern Ireland's position within the UK.

MEDIA STAR

Sean Connery is as well known these days for being the SNP's very own media star as for being an ex-007, having provided voice-overs for several SNP political broadcasts in half a million letters appealing for votes, "signed" by the appearance on behalf of the party in this campaign, but in the letter he urges voters to join him in voting for them, and fulfilling his "dearest wish" of an independent Scotland.

HOGWASH

Meanwhile, the Natural Law Party told the three main party leaders that they would have to subscribe to the party's policies on transcendental meditation and yoga flying if they were to heal rifts on Europe within their ranks. Dr Geoffrey Clements, the party leader, said that Britain's leaders need to listen to "nature's intelligence".

GREENS

GREENS

GREENS

GREENS

Dimbleby

Parties over La War I

Parties over La War I

Parties over La War I

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مكتبة من الأصيل

Dimbleby the consummate performer shows his hand



Triumphant mood: Peter Snow, David Dimbleby and Jeremy Paxman sharing a lighthearted joke with photographers on the BBC's election night set. Photograph: Tom Pilton

Rob Brown
Media Editor

Television's grand inquisitor Jeremy Paxman appeared distinctly jumpy yesterday when the tables were turned on him by media pundits invited to marvel at the BBC's Election Night studio set.

Paxman had to be prodded out of his self-styled "pen" - an interviewing lair up in the gods of the studio - by the Corporation's press handlers who insisted that he should make a smiling appearance following a recent magazine interview in which he hinted at some dissatisfaction about being kept in David Dimbleby's shadow.

"Listen, I was not disappointed. It was what we call in the trade a joke. J.O.K.E." he told me when I did my best Paxman impression and raised this vexed topic.

Later, loosening up slightly, he described himself as "the fool to Dimbleby's King Lear" and said he would dread being asked to play the big serious anchorman role at a future election. "It seems to be rather complicated."

It sure does. The BBC is hailing its Election Night special as the biggest broadcasting event in its history. It will certainly be among the longest - running from 9.55pm to at least midnight on 2 May.

It took 16 lorries to deliver and three days to erect the silver-hued tubular steel "theatre-in-the-round" set in studio 1 at BBC Television Centre, which will serve as the hub of the operation, housing 120 computer terminals, 200 monitors, 100 telephones, 30 miles of video cable and wiring and backed up by 80 outside broadcast units dotted throughout the British Isles.

Although the cameras will be trained on Dimbleby and his fellow presenters, plus the delighted and dejected politicians they lure into Paxman's lair, viewers will also see the

camera crews, the results' team and computer back-up people.

"They will all be visible so that licence-payers can see their money is being well-spent," said Peter Horrocks, editor of *Newsnight* and *Election '97*, who was keen to point out that the cost of the coverage would be about £2.5m, roughly the same as in 1992.

But there was no sign of skimping. The lavish set is a cross between the Starship Enterprise and a Roman amphitheatre. Dimbleby averred that it reminded him of the Cirque du Soleil, a famous Canadian circus troupe, at the Royal Albert Hall. "You expect acrobats in leotards to appear," he joked. He may be the circus-master, but he will also be performing, as ever, a double-act with Peter Snow, who was like a child in a toy shop yesterday demonstrating his new virtual swingometer, live 3-D graphics and zappy election night computer games.

One sequence - already tested on the Wirral South by-election result programme - will depict the parties' battle-buses either roaring ahead or disappearing into a watery ditch, depending on their performance at the poll. Another will show key target seats being smashed up on screen if the incumbent is unseated.

"Visually the graphics are the most exciting," Snow enthused. "They'll be able to tell the story as never before."

The story the BBC wants to tell on 2 May is that it has once again triumphed on the ratings front. In its 1992 Election Night coverage the Beeb drew 8 million viewers, twice as many as ITV. By 2am its audience had fallen to 4.5 million, but this was three times as large as its commercial rival.

"I'd be disappointed if our coverage this time round wasn't as popular," said Mr Horrocks, issuing a further solemn pledge to licence-payers: "It's long, but it's not going to be boring."

Parties battle over Labour's 'War Book'

Christian Wolmar
and Colin Brown

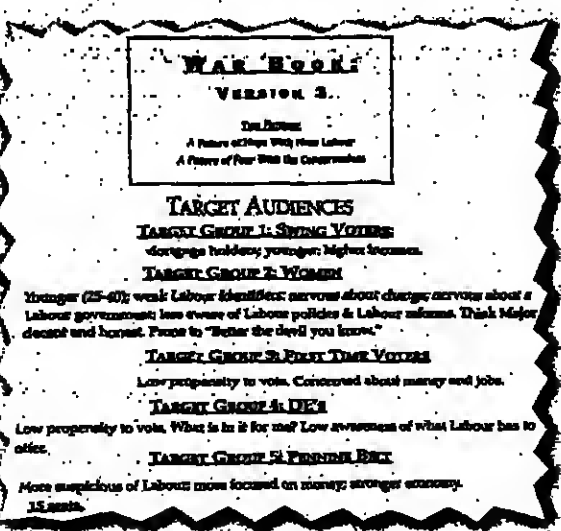
Labour's battle plan for the election, revealing its assessment of both its and the Tories' weaknesses and strengths, was leaked by the Tories yesterday, provoking a row over its importance and relevance.

Brian Mawhinney, Conservative chairman, said the document, "War Book Version 3", "reflects very closely what has been happening over the last six months in what is quite clearly the most cynical political campaign ever seen in British politics." It correctly identified Labour's own perceived weaknesses, suggesting the Tories' decision to concentrate on Europe was a result of Labour accepting that it was seen as likely to sell out to Brussels.

Labour spin-doctors appeared unconcerned about its publication but Dr Mawhinney grabbed the evening headlines, knocking off Labour's announcement about the Lottery. Labour also hinted that it had similar documents relating to the Tories' plans but a source said: "We would not be stupid enough to publish them."

Tory candidates are being issued with extracts from the 30-page dossier to sharpen their campaigning on the doorstep by showing that Labour secretly feared it was weak on the "hidden left", the unions, the lack of experience of Tony Blair's team, and being evasive.

However, Dr Mawhinney failed to point out that the Labour analysis identified Labour's strengths as "Tony Blair - young, strong and dynamic, leadership"; and education, and the NHS were seen as "winning" issues for Labour. Labour sources last night said



Poll position: Excerpts from the leaked document

it was a year-old document, it was not their current election plan, and denied it was a summary of what Labour said about itself. Labour said it listed Tory claims about their own strengths.

The War Book lists both parties' strategies and plans, and outlines in detail Labour's plan for the five months in the run-up to the election. While much in the document, which is at least six months old, has happened as predicted, or has been announced subsequently by Labour, some lines of attack have been dropped by Labour and others have been added.

For example, a page referring to Tory pledges says: "You will pay to visit your school; you will pay more for books; you will pay VAT on books; there will be more crime; guns and knives still legal; you will pay for water through a meter." This line of attack was prepared in anticipation of announcements by the

Tories. But there is no mention of things like privatisation of pensions, which clearly surprised Labour.

There is also a fascinating reference to the 15 key seats in the Pennine belt, where internal Labour polling suggests local people are more concerned with tax and less bothered about health and education than in the rest of the country. Labour's weaknesses are seen as money, fear of Labour, "what do they stand for?" "why are they evasive?" break-up of Britain and Labour councils.

Conservative strengths are the economy (inflation, interest rates and economic competence), patriotism (Europe, the Union), Mr Major (decent, honest) and continuity. Their weaknesses are "17 years too long", "for the few, not the many", Mr Major's weak leadership, division/dissatisfaction, betrayal/trust, tax, NHS, education, crime.

Greens badger Ashdown over backing for bypass

Barrie Clement

Paddy Ashdown attempted to spend quality time with a dormouse and a pantomime cow yesterday. Amid eco-heckling from Green Party activists and interjections from the ensatz bovine creature, Mr Ashdown tried to explain his party's support for the Newbury by-pass.

The front end of the cow was protesting over the construction of the road, as indeed was the back end. The Liberal Democrat leader addressed the head of the cow, arguing that while the by-pass would have an environmental impact, it was in-

finely preferable to the current state of affairs. The Liberal Democrats' own polling had shown 87 per cent of residents supported the decision.

The arguments were having little impact on the beast and Mr Ashdown was advised by a party activist that he was talking in the wrong end of the animal.

The cow confided to *The Independent* that it was an eco-criminal, having been arrested for trespassing on the by-pass construction site. As a condition of bail, the cow, or Rockin' Rosie, as she called herself, regularly attended the local police station.

The dormouse, which took its place among a dozen eccentric protesters outside Greenham Court primary school, fell even more aggrieved. "Let's have a debate. Let the badger have his say," said a magnanimous Mr Ashdown to the rodent.

"I'm not a badger. I'm a dormouse," came the reply. "Most of my bat and badger friends were killed during the by-pass construction. I am very, very lonely."

The protesters tried to stop Mr Ashdown entering the school but were brushed aside by an unlikely alliance of police and Liberal Democrats.

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HEWLETT-PACKARD

'Donnygate' affair spawns its own anti-sleaze hero



Confidante candidate: Neil Swan, who is standing on an anti-sleaze Labour ticket, chatting to Doncaster voters yesterday. Photograph: David Rose

Christian Wolmar

Labour faces its own anti-sleaze candidate in Doncaster, which has achieved national notoriety with a local government scandal of growing proportions.

Neil Swan, a former Labour Doncaster candidate, is standing on an "anti-sleaze Labour" ticket against Kevin Hughes, a junior Labour whip in the last Parliament and also a former Doncaster councillor.

The Donnygate affair, which has been dubbed recently as "the worst local government scandal since the Poulson affair", first came to light in January after the district auditor revealed he was questioning the validity of trips abroad and extravagant "working" lunches by councillors.

Earlier this week, it was revealed that the police are

widening their inquiry to include land deals, contracts with a security firm and various other financial deals and the police are now setting up an office in the town hall.

Mr Swan said he wants to put pressure on the national party and to act as a focus for local concern about corruption at the council. A New Labour supporter, he wants to draw the national party's attention to what has been happening for many years in Doncaster.

Mr Swan was a councillor between 1987 and 1990 and fell foul of what he calls the ruling "Mafia" on the council. He said: "It started at the first meeting I went to, when I asked a few questions about the annual report, they didn't like that."

An inner caucus of leading councillors, based originally around the National Union of

Mineworkers, the miners' community group, has long made the key decisions about what happens on Doncaster council, and Mr Swan fell foul of them: "I discovered their existence by accident. I was driving, a bit early, to a meeting, and I saw this bunch of councillors standing outside the local T&G office. They had obviously tried to get in for a meeting but the caretaker had locked them out. When they noticed me, they started jumping over hedges and trying to hide behind the building. It was hilarious."

Thanks to a grant of £7,000 from the People's Trust, a fund created with a £2m donation by Mohamed Al Fayed, Mr Swan has an office, a fax and even a hired van. He hopes that there will be some money left over to sponsor candidates in the 1998 council elections, if the clean-

up of the council, which has started through the resignation of several leading councillors, has not been completed.

Out on the stump, Mr Swan drops into a group of women who live in terraced housing opposite a development site. They have complained about not receiving any information as roadworks and shops appeared opposite them, with no warning.

Two of them, Heather Wilson and Susan Arksey, have been hounding the council for two years but their letters get lost or they receive patronising replies. Mrs Wilson said: "We started taking in our letters to the council to make sure they got there, but they refused to give us a receipt for them."

In the market in Thorn, one of the small towns which make up much of the Doncaster North constituency, Mr Swan is

greeted by supporters. He has become a repository for all complaints about the council, but there is, too, deep embarrassment about Donnygate.

"I've seen those councillors plotting in the local club. They're like a coven of male witches," says Frank Dallas, a pensioner, who is angry about recent figures showing some councillors getting more than £20,000 a year in expenses.

Yet, local Tories are surprisingly uninterested in exploiting the scandal. Peter Kennerley, a candidate from Central Office casting - a City lawyer and Wandsworth councillor - reckons that Doncaster people will not react well to an outsider raising local sleaze: "This is still the people's republic of South Yorkshire. People are very dependent on the council and don't dare criticise it."



by Anonymous

It was Wednesday, the polls had been bad - but Bobby was not wobbling. Not that much ever wobbled with Bobby. His lean frame and bony features were not suited to it. Anything wobbly was kept well out of sight.

A roger, he told any passing piranhas who asked about the survey showing a sudden drop in his party's lead, "full of technical deficiencies." And in a way it was good that this poll was quite so bad. When, by the end of the week, the others came out showing a better picture, the story would be all about the Candidate's recovery and the Grey Man's gloom.

Meanwhile, momentum was vital. The party must show no signs of flagging, no let-up in its assault on the eyes and ears of the nation's commentators. They'd made that mistake in 1992, and were not going to make it again - not on his watch.

So today he had had no less than three events to attend to, and it was still only four in the afternoon. The most exciting - held in a London television studio in front of a live audience of piranhas and tame punters - had launched a populist initiative involving giving lottery money to things that folk liked. Politically it was the perfect deal, no-one lost and everybody gained. It was a win-win deal, with guaranteed publicity.

As usual the Prodigies had done a celebrity trawl and uncovered a former Olympic athlete to endorse the proposals on education, and yet another hugely successful middle-aged woman - this time to back the plans for health clubs for all. Bobby was getting rather fond of these confident matrons, whose capacity to sell jobs and sex advice to the women of Britain had emboldened them to go on to public platforms and speak earnestly about the politics/spirituality interface. One had fallen for the Candidate because of the way in which he "dialogued" with people.

But the fairy on the Christmas tree was a special guest appearance from the world-famous Oscar-winning film director, whose last speech had been the one in which he had accepted all those awards on that vast stage in California. When the director had come to the rostrum, Bobby had half expected to be mentioned in a long list of those to be thanked for this wonderful success - "and, finally, to my



friend Bobby, without whom none of this would have been possible."

Event two was his own show, unveiling the movie about the Candidate, shot by the award-winning woman documentary director. After this campaign, he thought, he might have difficulty in mixing with people who had not actually won awards. What were you if you had no BAFTAs, Oscars, or Olympic Golds on your sideboard?

The tankful of piranhas was surprisingly receptive to what he had described as "the Candidate, almost raw." Especially since "almost raw" had actually meant "in the kitchen". But Bobby liked the word "raw". Only the yellow-tied former Trotskyist had been hostile, determined to discover whether the documentary woman had been prevented from filming in other places ("like where?" he thought, "the loo?").

It was even calmer half an hour later when Mr Brown and Red Dawn gave a little press conference about VAT Bobby stood at the back in characteristic pose, his left hand resting in the crook of his right arm, his right hand swivelling at the wrist to pull at his nose, he waved dismissively at questions from the Daily Telegraph, or to shield his mouth when making pertinent observations to Big Al, who was looming just behind him.

The most exhausting thing was never quite knowing what the media flock would do next. He knew that a considerable part of his reputation rested on an almost superstitious belief in the part of the Candidate's office in his capacity to affect the sudden startling-like wheezing and

changes of direction that these gregarious animals exhibited from time to time. But it was never as simple as that. Sudden moods would arise, unforeseen mistakes would be made. Only last night, in middle of his moment of passion, the untested Candidate (usually a model of precision) had got his lines mixed up, and had inadvertently watered down one of the few commitments the party actually had. It had taken 10 hours to sort things out.

But he was relatively happy now, and able at leisure to reflect on two things he had never before noticed. The first was that Mr Brown's arms were rather short. The second was that the campaign was rather long. Then his sleep went off.

One middle-aged woman had fallen for Bobby because of the way he dialogued with the people

"No political party is in favour of homelessness. No one sets out to encourage it. Unfortunately, the policies sometimes have that effect. It's true it has not featured in the election campaign so far. The truth is it is not a vote-winner. That is absolutely wrong, but unfortunately it is so." - Tony Banks



Scotland may well decide the outcome. - John Major

"Peter doesn't have to have his reality made virtual. He's his own reality." - Peter Horrocks, editor of the BBC's election night programme, talking about Peter Snow and his 3D swingometer

"Politicians are not in the best position to pontificate on this subject of drugs. It is largely a generational problem." - Sir David Steel, Liberal Democrat elder statesman

"Everywhere I go in the world, people want to know about Scotland and why we tolerate our affairs being run by someone else's government." - Sean Connery in a letter to 500,000 voters urging them to support the Scottish National Party.

Compiled by Ben Summers and Sam Coates

Etonian turns back on old school

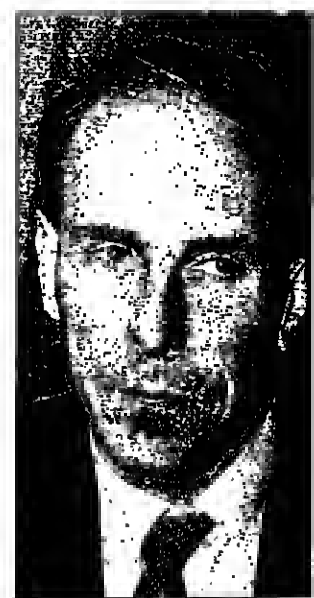
Barrie Clement

Old Etonian David Rendel, Liberal Democrat candidate for Newbury, yesterday said his three sons had had a better education at the local comprehensive than he had received at the country's most prestigious public school.

Mr Rendel, the party's local government spokesman in the last parliament, said he had been educated in a "very strange and unusual way". Speaking at Greenham Court primary school, in Newbury, also attended by his children, Mr Rendel said: "The education they received here was rather better than the one I got."

"They have seen more of the world. They grew up with normal people in a way I did not. They are more worldly wise, they know their way in the world better than I did."

Mr Rendel, who was accompanying Paddy Ashdown on a visit to the school, said the facilities at Eton, where the fees are £13,410 a year, were very good. "If we could have those advantages in the state sector, who knows what could be achieved?" Mr Rendel's sons are 18, 16 and 13. Asked by *The Independent* whether his education had made him a strange and unusual person, he replied: "Any child of any politician will find their father rather strange."



Rendel: 'Strange' schooling

Mr Rendel is defending a 22,000-by-election majority, but his seat could be vulnerable to his Conservative challenger because of the boundary changes.

The headmaster of Eton kept his own counsel about the comments of the school's former pupil.

Later Mr Ashdown spoke in an "open circle" in Bath on education attended by teachers, leavers, students and parents.

Of the 23 guests who attended the meeting to give their views and hear those of Mr Ashdown, not one spoke in favour of selection at schools.

Asked what they would do if they could make one decision as Secretary of State for Education, many supported a reduction in class sizes.

The Liberal Democrat leader told the meeting that although all three parties claimed to emphasise education, the Conservatives had only devoted one press conference to the subject.

Millbank tendency gives words whole new meaning

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Labour's Millbank tendency have done it again. Now they are even tinkering with the English language.

Not content with rewriting their party's constitution and many of its policies, Tony Blair's aides have now turned their attentions to rewriting the political lexicon.

Responding to the findings of focus groups, Labour is increasingly controlling the language its candidates use. Using a strategy designed both to reassure and to enthrone voters, the party is developing a whole new lexicon of its own.

Even on the campaign trail, would-be MPs regularly ring their party's communications headquarters in London to check the "line" on a particular topic.

Sentences containing words such as "strong", "opportunity", and "challenge" often result from these conversations.

"Millennium" is a very new Labour word, too. It conveys both the excitement of a new era and the certainty of 1,000 years of history.

The *Independent's* database shows 55 instances of Tony Blair's name being mentioned in the same article as word since the election campaign

Parties' lexicon for campaign usage

New Labour	Regenerate	Drift
Words	Key	Conflict
Core	Destiny	Surrender
Foundation	Nation	Inexperience
Security	Citizen	Dictate
Millennium	Community	Inexperience
Challenge	Plaque	Rush headlong
Opportunity	Passion	Weaken
Modern	Reborn	Threat
Young	Desire	Divide
New	Transformation	Naked
Stakeholder	Aspiration	Diminish
Confidence	Ambition	Nation state
Strength	Tony Words	One nation
Contract	Danger	History
Reward	Fear	
Maturity		

began, while John Major comes up just 34 times in the same context. Likewise "regenerate", "vision" and "destiny".

New Labour is clearly keen to portray itself as a party full of young, vigorous politicians but not to let any hint of inexperience slip through.

Tony Blair has been connected with the word "young" 471 times since the election campaign began, while John Major has had just 379 links. Mr Blair and the word "modern" have been paired 169 times, while the Prime Minister and the same word have been paired only 124 times.

Passion, too, is the territory

of Labour in the 1997 campaign. Mr Blair and passion have been mentioned together 45 times, while Mr Major has clocked up just 22 mentions.

"Stakeholder society," once a key phrase for Tony Blair, seems to have taken a dive during the election campaign. It appears the focus groups may have reported vagueness on what the phrase actually meant.

The Conservatives' language has a dual message, too. They aim to spread fear about what a Labour government might mean, and they want to press home the message that Britain is already a safe, comfortable place to live.

Tory words on a Labour future include "danger", "drift", "conflict" and "surrender", while "our great nation", "booming" and "you can only be sure" help to reassure.

Meanwhile, "sovereignty" and "nation state" are making a shaky bid for prevalence in the light of the party's debate over Europe.

John Underwood, the former director of communications for the Labour Party and now a senior partner in Clear Communications, does not believe the development of such a political patois is surprising.

What is new is the way the words are chosen to appeal to about 250,000 "switchers and aqueueers" in key marginal seats, he says.

There's a micro-campaign being waged in pursuit of these quarters of a million people. This language is designed for them, Mr Underwood said.

Austin Mitchell, the Labour MP for Great Grimsby, is not impressed with the gale of paper which blows out of his fax machine every day with instructions.

"What I want is ideas for issues to put over and answers to the kind of questions that come from the electors. This is just endless regurgitation of the leadership's speeches," Mr Mitchell said.

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Stephen Goodwin

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من الأصل

Stephen Goodwin reports on the tussle for votes in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland



Food for thought: Charles Kennedy, Liberal Democrat MP for Ross, Skye and Inverness, enjoying a tea and scone break on the campaign trail

Photograph: Brian Harris

Kennedy fights for his northern life

The notion of a Highlands and Islands group of Labour MPs wielding a kind of crofters' block vote at Westminster sounds at first like revolutionary talk brought on by too many single malts downed in front of a peat fire.

But perhaps not. Labour candidates in the west of Scotland believe this election offers the best opportunity for decades of reviving the home-grown radical movement which grew out of the crofters' struggles of the 1880s. Now, as then, land reform would be top of its agenda.

Two of the putative group are defending seats held in the last Parliament, Calum Macdonald in the Western Isles and Brian Wilson, Labour's campaign coordinator.

Lying south of the Clyde, Mr Wilson's Cunningham North constituency could hardly be de-

scribed as "Highland", though it does include the Isle of Arran. He is, however, a driving force behind the group, a founder of Skye's *West Highland Free Press*, who could be a voice in a Labour cabinet.

"There has always been a distinctive Highland agenda - land ownership and transport are the main issues - but it is very rare for us to have an opportunity to push it to national prominence," Mr Wilson said.

The last time the Highlands had two Labour MPs and their own party in office, the big spending Highland and Islands Development Board was set up. There has been no comparable initiative since.

The three other potential group members are in Liberal Democrat constituencies. James Healdy, an Inverness solicitor, probably stands least chance. He is up against the vet-

eran Bob MacLennan in Caithness, Sutherland, and Easter Ross, though interestingly when Mr MacLennan won the seat in 1966 it was for Labour. He switched to the SDP in the 1980s.

Then there is David Stewart, a social worker and councillor in "too-close-to-call" Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber. The retirement of Sir Russell Johnston has left the seat a four-way marginal on paper but most pundits think the SNP's Fergus Ewing, solicitor son of Winnie "Madame Ecosse" Ewing, is edging ahead.

Most Labour hopes are pinned on Dennis Munro, front man for the Gaelic rock band Runrig, who is challenging Charles Kennedy in Ross, Skye and Inverness West.

Boundary changes have cost Mr Kennedy natural voters in East Ross and added Labour

wards in Inverness, the SNP's Margaret Paterson is likely to pick up votes in her home area of Dingwall, and there are malicious whispers that after 14 years as an engaging television star for a party unlikely to gain power he might prefer to concentrate on broadcasting. His dismissal of the rumour is unprintable, nevertheless he does not seem convinced by the "Oh you'll be okay" confidence he hears on doorsteps.

Mr Munro is not only a native of Skye, with nearly a quarter of the seat's 56,000 voters, but has cult status among the young-right across Scotland. Some 50,000 watched the band at an open air concert by Loch Lomond in 1991.

Watching him argue Labour's case at cottage doors on the island of Raasay, off Skye, in his black coat and boots, he looks like an Amish preacher come to

call. His message certainly has a religious fervour.

Just as he believes Runrig's music has given Gaeldom a greater cultural confidence, now, aged 42, he wants to help empower the Islands and Highlands politically.

"We have been in a backwater politically for too long. The Liberals may appear inoffensive and quasi-independent but over 30 years they have proved utterly ineffectual," he said.

For inspiration, Mr Munro had only to look across the

Sound of Raasay to Braes, on Skye, where a memorial commemorates the last battle fought on British soil.

In 1882 crofters incensed by rents fought a pitched battle with a squad of sheriff's men. Several people were imprisoned and fined at Inverness. But though the battle was lost, the campaign was a success. Crofters secured rights of tenure and for a time elected their own MPs - a piece of misty-eyed history which just might repeat itself.

Labour's lottery to help the NHS

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

A £1bn "People's Lottery" fund to support education and health projects would be set up by a Labour government, Tony Blair said yesterday.

The Labour leader joked that while his party could not guarantee that people would win the lottery, he would guarantee that their money went to the causes they really cared about.

He told an election press conference that the fund would be created from the proceeds of the current National Lottery mid-week draw over five years, and would be used to pay for new projects that fell outside services normally financed by taxation. "It will not substitute for what the taxpayer does," he said. "It will add to what people get."

But Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage, claimed that the Labour scheme would threaten the success of the National Lottery, increase bureaucracy and undermine the concept that it should only fund projects additional to those already met by central government.

"Labour pledge the same money over and over again to different projects," she said. "The only clear thing is that their figures do not add up and it would all end in tears."

Illustrating the type of projects that would benefit, Mr Blair said some of the cash would be used to make sure that teachers had the skills to deal with computers in the classroom; finance children's after-school learning programmes; and set up healthy living centres. Labour was also planning to use the "People's Lottery" fund to finance a national talent endowment scheme for science,

technology and the arts, fostering new talent for the future. The endowment scheme, supported at the press conference by Rachel Portman, Oscar-winning composer of the music for the film *Emma*, and Anthony Minghella, director of the Oscar-winning film *The English Patient*, could be earning copyright revenues by 2001.

Miriam Stoppard, the writer and broadcaster, backed the plans for healthy-living centres; a network offering fitness checks and routines, and advice on diet and health, located in high streets, shopping centres and leisure centres.

Labour's national heritage spokesman, Jack Cunningham, said: "The lottery is very effective at raising cash, but people believe more of it should go to the things they think are important and which make a real difference to their lives."

"If the benefits are to be fully realised there must be a new, better approach to the allocation of the funds. We must ensure a more effective and equitable system for lottery awards. Awards such as £15m for the Churchill papers and financial support for Eton College caused public outrage."

Dr Cunningham also said that there were enormous regional disparities in the allocation of lottery money, and, under Labour, existing funding bodies would be expected to demonstrate commitment to a geographically-fair distribution.

Existing rules worked against less prosperous areas and communities, he said. They would be made more flexible and Labour would also set up "Community Chests" across the country, enabling more people at a local level to influence the distribution and allocation of funds.

AROUND THE REGIONS

Boom town that remains an important battleground

Northampton is one of the towns which the Conservatives would argue, backs their slogan Britain is Booming, but that might not be enough to woo the voters on 1 May. Economically, Northampton is reaping the benefits of its central geographical position with the growth of distribution warehouses and light industry and lower than average unemployment.

But Labour controls both the borough and, at least until 1 May, the county council, the town has high pockets of unemployment and an estimated 75,000 people are dependent on Job Seekers Allowances or Income Support in the county.

Northampton North is a key marginal for the Labour Party with their candidate, Sally Keeble, needing a 3.6 per cent swing to take it from out-spoken Conservative candidate Tony Marlow.

The contest is tougher in Northampton South, where the Conservative's Michael Morris has a 10,000 majority. Although that majority has suffered with the boundary changes, Labour's Tony Clarke still needs an estimated 12.7 per cent swing to take it.

The town has had its share of presidential-style visits, one from John Prescott and one by Labour leader Tony Blair, while their Conservative equivalents have stayed silent. This is not a surprise to Mr Marlow, one of the eight Tory

MPs who had the whip removed and whose election literature comes out firmly against a single currency. But in spite of, or perhaps because of, all the politicking and the recent visits, voters in the town are bemused by the General Election.

Voter Karla Dearsley, 41, said: "There are lots of issues, but they (the politicians) are not really addressing them, are they? Things like employment, the welfare state, pensions. They seem more interested in saying what the other people would do if they got the chance than what they would do. There are no personalities that I particularly warm to either but my fear is that John Major might get people's sympathy because they think, poor chap, his party is being rotten to him."

Her views are echoed by Cameron Wood, who was 18 when the Tories were elected to power in 1979. "I'm not really sure what I'm going to do yet," he said.

"The issue for me is that I bought a house in 1989 and I have seen huge mortgage and interest rises and I have negative equity on my home and, for probably selfish reasons, my main fear is that it will go up if Labour got in."

The impression in Northampton, despite hard campaigning from Labour, is that "don't knows" still hold the key.

Susan Howe
of the Northampton Herald & Post

political shorts

Anti-gun lobby turns its fire on the Tories

The anti-gun lobby will today throw its weight firmly against the Conservatives as the banning of handguns becomes a party political issue. Ann Pearson, of the Snowdrop Campaign, along with members of the Gun Control Network and representatives of the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties, will share a platform to attack Tory views on firearms.

The campaigners against handguns had initially sought to be apolitical as they attempted to bring about a ban in the wake of the Dunblane massacre. The change in stance follows a survey by the Gun Control Network of parliamentary candidates views on a total handgun ban. Gill Marshall-Andrews, who chairs the group, said: "If it's important to you that we make this country safer and ban all handguns, then don't vote Tory."

Meanwhile, Mrs Pearson said that the Snowdrop Campaign, which played a major part in bringing about tighter firearms legislation after Dunblane, would officially disband on the day of the election.

Ian Burrell

007 goes to SNP's aide

Realistic enough at least to know that letters from politicians go straight in the bin, the Scottish National Party has sent its supporters and waverers an appeal signed by the party's best-known overseas supporter, the actor Sean Connery. "Everywhere I go in the world people want to know about Scotland and why we tolerate our affairs being run by someone else's government," says Mr Connery, a resident of Marbella in Spain. Some 500,000 copies of the letter are being sent out. The 66-year-old actor, a former James Bond whose visage peers from the page, says it is his "dearest wish to see Scotland free", but the Nationalists are keeping silent over whether he might join the campaign in person. Stephen Goodwin

PM's vow to Scots fishermen

John Major promised Scottish fishermen that he would stand firm against Europe until the problem of quota-hoppers had been resolved. He gave three pledges to Scotland's fishermen in a letter to Robert Allan, chief executive of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, during his campaign trip to the north east of Scotland. Meanwhile, Henry McLeish, Labour's Scottish campaign co-ordinator, claimed that only his party could fight successfully for the reform of the European Common Agricultural Policy to help Scottish farmers. Sam Coates

Bookies cut winning odds

William Hill has cut the odds on the Tories forming a government with an overall majority from 15/2 to 6/1, while the odds on them being the largest single party have narrowed from 9/2 to 7/2. Labour remains favourite, though its odds have lengthened from 1/8 to 1/6 to be the largest party and from 1/6 to 2/5 to win an overall majority.

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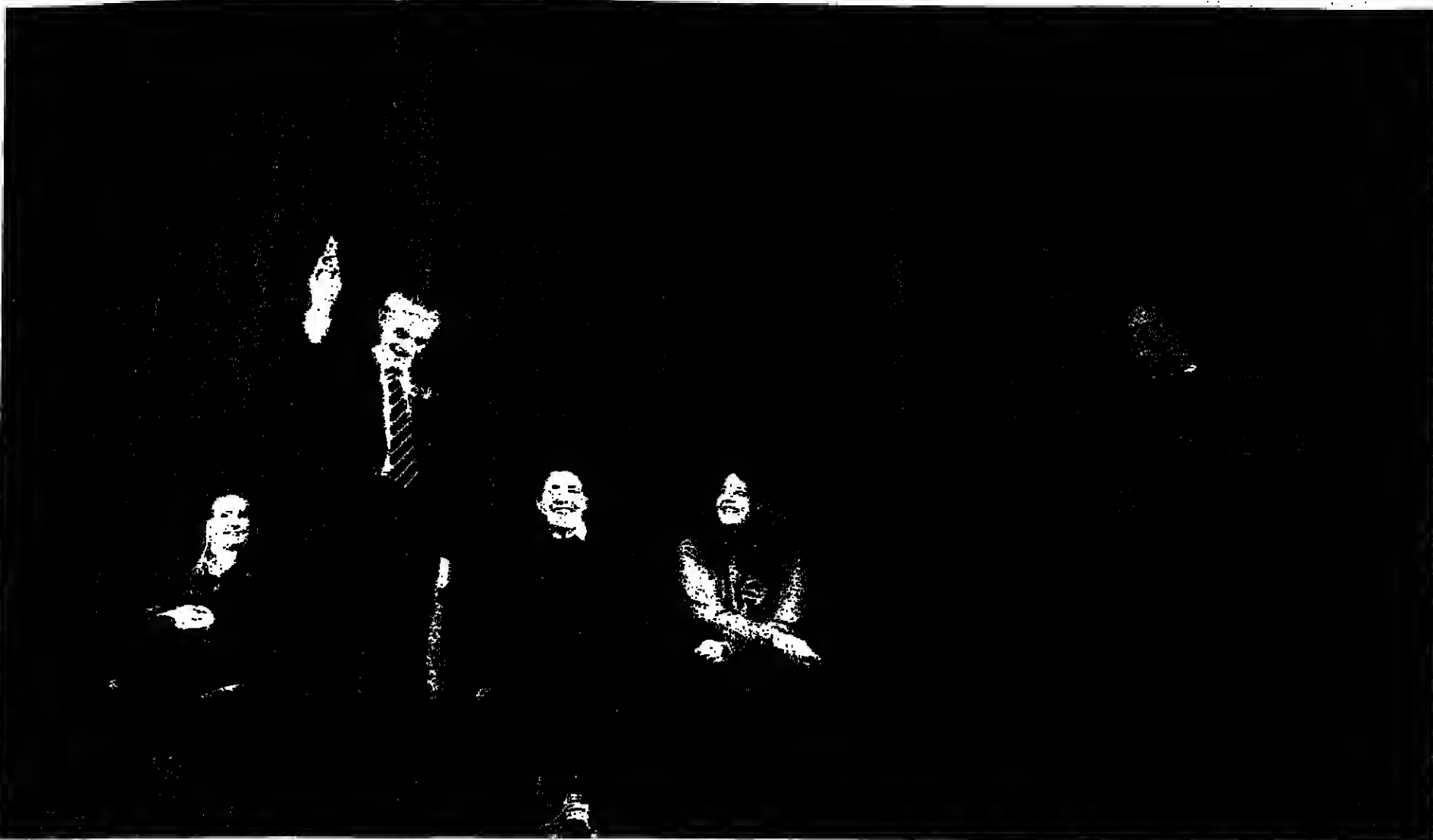
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Poll fever inspires new class



Youth appeal: (left to right) Higgins (Lib Dem), Rollason (new Labour), Aers (old Labour) and Matheson (Tory) at the Durham Johnston school hustings

Photograph: John Voos

Young voters at Durham Johnston comprehensive school have a unique election opportunity many of their adult counterparts might welcome.

Among the four candidates standing in this Durham comprehensive mock-election are representatives of old and new Labour, battling it out with each other as well as with their Liberal Democrat and Tory rivals.

The divisions so carefully plastered over at national level broke apart at Durham Johnston when politics student Rosa Aers, 16, offered to stand for Labour only if she could stick to her Bennite principles and propose re-nationalisation, uni-

Lucy Ward finds political passion stirring in the sixth-form

lateral nuclear disarmament and a decent minimum wage.

"We felt we ought also to have a speaker who was more representative of new-Labour thinking," explains John Dumford, the head teacher, and 18-year-old Jonathan Rollason, a national debating champion, was roped in to fill the gap.

New Labour's man, with his outside red rose, suit and tie and winning oratory, was clearly born for the hustings, but he is the only one of the four sixth-formers living in a safe Labour seat who has no firm political convictions.

Tony Blair, who once lived within the school's catchment area, but who attended Durham Chorister prep school just across the city, could still win this waverer's general-election vote, but so might Paddy Ashdown.

Lib Dem candidate Rebecca Higgins, 17, is too young to vote for real but has supported her party "ever since I can remember". At the lectern in front of 230 attentive sixth-formers yesterday, she urged: "If everyone who agreed with the Liberal Democrats voted for us we would have a chance."

Claire Matheson, 17, admits that as a teenage Tory she is a rare find in the staunchly Labour North-East. "Only the Conservatives will offer opportunities for all, including the chance of a good education and a job," she proclaimed, adeptly brushing aside questions on party divisions over Europe.

The mock election at Durham Johnston, one of more than 3,600 schools nationwide to hold its own poll, has succeeded in stirring political passion in the classrooms where the national version has not, students say.

The corridors are plastered with poster-slogans. "Twenty years ago the North-East had mines, now it has unemployment," says old Labour, while the Tories take a break from negative campaigning with "dynamic - the party and the candidate".

The hustings each morning this week have been lively, with candidates pinned down on Europe, tax and education, and - in a bold departure from traditional political practice - attempting to answer questions. "The school can act as a counterweight to the national

apathy and raise interest in the election," says Mr Dumford.

So, who from Durham Johnston would have won the key to Number 10? Jonathan romped home by a 25-vote margin over old Labour, and bringing up the rear, was the valiant Tory candidate, Claire, with 27 votes.

Third came Rebecca, who knows her party will not be governing on 2 May, and second was Rosa, aspiring Labour MP and self-confessed "school-communist", who says it is politicians who behave like schoolchildren. "They bicker and fight like little boys in the playground. It is as if they have forgotten they are running the country."

HOW I WILL VOTE: MICHAEL WINNER

In the real world it's very difficult to be different

How will you vote?

For the first time in my life I am on the undecided list.

Why?

I am a natural Conservative voter, and I oppose the idea of too much state interference and central control. But on the face of it we now have two Conservative parties, one led by Blair, one led by Major. Blair's one may not turn out to be as Conservative as it now appears, whereas Major's is so utterly divided it does not deserve a vote.

What issues affect the way that you will vote?

If, as Clinton said, the economy is everything, then why should anyone throw out Major? Whether he should be given the credit, or whether it happened by accident, the country is in extraordinarily good shape.

The greatest issue today, however, is Europe. But I don't think anybody knows what a future in Europe holds, or understands it fully. The Conservative Party are divided. It is unclear what their policy is on Europe as they are frightened to say if they have one. But I don't think Tony Blair is going to be so different. In the real world it's very difficult to be different.

How does living in Kensington and Chelsea affect the way you vote?

If it wasn't for Alan Clark, I'd certainly be voting for Tony Blair. I like Major and Blair both personally. I think they are terribly decent, cheerful people. Blair must be given credit for the extraordinary transformation he pulled off in the Labour Party. On the other hand, I also like Alan Clark. The more eccentrics we get in the House of Commons, the better, so I lean towards him as a human being.

The bottom line is that whatever I vote in my constituency the outcome is as good as decided. So I'm voting purely for my own conscience.

Sometimes I've forgotten to vote. But I've decided this time I will, because I feel, however pathetic, like having my 60 millionth of a per cent recorded. There's the added incentive that the polling station is in the Leyton House Museum, round the corner from my house. They've just put up a few nice pictures, so I may as well go and have a look at them.

Which politicians do you admire?

Apart from Alan Clark for his oddness, I also like Kenneth



Michael Winner: Wants more eccentrics in the Commons

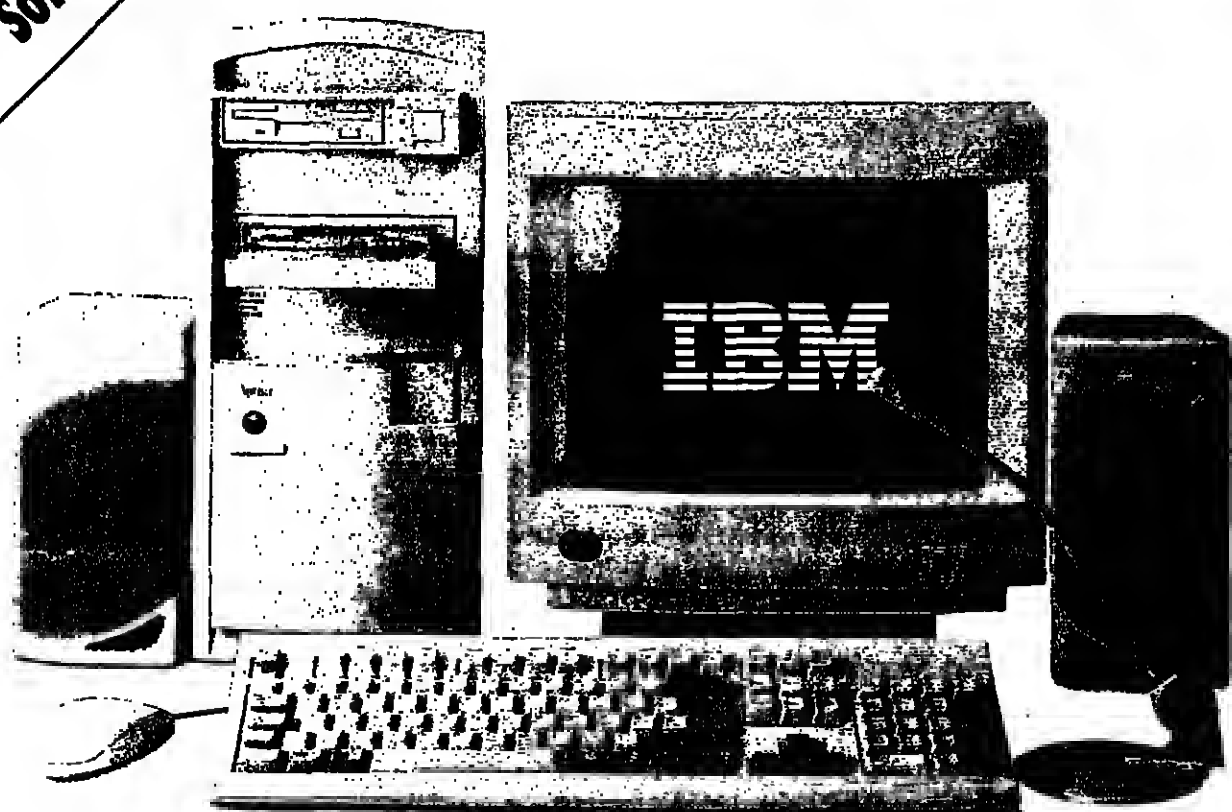
Clarke. I think he's done a terrific job. I admire John Major and Tony Blair, but I don't think you could get very excited about any of the others.

When did you first acquire an interest in politics?

At school I voted for Clement Attlee. Together with Thatcher, they were the great prime ministers of this century. Thereafter I remained a natural Conservative, sometimes voting, sometimes not. So I'm not what could be called a dedicated Conservative. If this time round I do vote for Labour and they then become extremely left-wing, I and many others will feel very let down. If they do get voted in, it is because they are essentially watered down Conservatives.

Interview by Sam Coates

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مكتبة الأمل

EMU membership: European Commission says 13 countries, including Britain, will make the grade

Italy fails first test to join single currency

Sarah Helm
Brussels

The European Commission yesterday declared Italy unfit to join the single currency, based on present economic forecasts, causing sparks to fly in Brussels and creating political ructions in Rome.

The row over Italy's failure so far to make the Euro-grade gave a foretaste of the bitter divisions which will break out across Europe when the final rulings on which countries qualify to join the single currency are made next year.

Prior to release of the data, the Italian government, headed by Romano Prodi, who has staked his future on bringing Italy into the single currency at the launch, was widely reported to have exerted pressure on the Commission to alter the figures. Emma Bonino, the Italian commissioner for consumer affairs, protested vigorously over the Commission's findings.

On other fronts, however, the Commission's outlook was surprisingly optimistic. Figures showed that a total of 13 countries - including Germany, France, Britain and Spain - will meet the key economic test, which requires countries to bring their public deficits down to 3 per cent of gross domestic product.

This was many more than indicated by separate forecasts yesterday from the International Monetary Fund. In its

view, seen as far more realistic by the financial markets, France, Germany, the UK and Spain will also just miss the 3 per cent target.

There is slower progress on the reduction of debt in the Commission's forecast, but it clearly believes its optimistic new growth forecast of 2.4 per cent for this year will help most countries turn the corner.

Both Spain and Portugal are also expected to make the grade, although many analysts predict that it would be politically impossible for Europe to refuse entry to Italy, a founder member, while accepting Spain and Portugal.

Yesterday's Commission figures were awaited with unprecedented interest as the deadline for decision-time on economic and monetary union draws nearer. Decisions on which countries qualify will be based on economic figures for this year, and will be made at a special council by heads of state and government in May next year, ahead of the launch on January 1st 1999.

Britain, which is expected to have brought its deficit down to 2.9 per cent of GDP this year, is now highly likely to qualify, unless other states continue to insist that the requirement to be part of the exchange rate mechanism be strictly enforced.

During the increasingly Euro-sceptic debate characterising the British election cam-

paign, both main parties argue that Britain must continue to "wait and see" before deciding whether to join EMU at the launch, giving the electorate the impression that decision-time for Britain still lies some way off.

However, as yesterday's announcement in Brussels reaffirmed, most other member states are already lining up at the starting gate.

Under the Maastricht Treaty, Britain must notify its partners of whether it wishes to be considered for membership of the EMU by the end of this year.

Any suggestion that Europe is "fudging" the convergence criteria in the final months will be seized on by British Eurosceptics as further grounds to stay outside and will also spur conflict between other member states.

Yesterday Yves Thibault de Silguy, the economic commissioner, rejected suggestions that there had been any "tinkering or trading" with the figures, and presented his experts' findings as proof that Europe was now "well on the road" to the EMU launch.

However, suspicions about the way the Commission has calculated its forecasts remain. Yesterday Mr de Silguy was challenged to justify how the Commission could have produced such a long list of qualifiers, in view of more cautious economic forecasts from other expert bodies. IMF world forecast, page 21



Milanese opulence: To prosperous northerners, the news that Italy is last in the race to qualify for EMU is humiliating

Photograph: Colorific

Euro-rebuke wounds Prodi's pride

Andrew Gumbel
Rome

There could have been no clearer sign of the helplessness of the Italian government: when the European Commission announced yesterday that Italy was at the bottom of the class of countries hoping to qualify for the single European currency, scarcely anyone had the strength to sound indignant.

Qualifying for monetary union on time has been the policy backbone of Romano Prodi's government, and failure will almost certainly spell its downfall. But yesterday the politicians could barely put a brave public face on the Commission's conclusions. Only Mr Prodi had the courage to call them "incomprehensible". The financial markets barely reacted.

According to the Commission's calculations, Italy will be close but not close enough to the 3-per-cent deficit-to-Gross-Domestic-Product ratio stipulated by the Maastricht treaty by the end of this year. It is then set to slide backwards towards a ratio of 3.9 per cent in 1998.

The Commission report did not rule out Italy's chances, but it made clear that further deep structural changes in the economy would be necessary to put the country back in the running. The report was a stinging assault to Italy's pride. It is hardly flattering for a G7 country to be relegated below Spain and Portugal and left floundering just above Greece in the European pecking order.

The writing has been on the wall for some time. Because of the byzantine and contradictory architecture of Italy's governing coalition, last month's

mini-budget completely failed to deliver the austerity medicine that was needed, resorting instead to statistical manipulations that fooled nobody.

The same political difficulties almost scuppered the Italian-led intervention force which is now in Albania - an operation intended to boost Italy's international credibility but which has turned into banana-skin hell.

The latest slip-up was a cruel but accurate illustration of the government's general discomfort: the Italian flagship, the *Vittorio Veneto*, spent all of Tuesday and part of yesterday stuck on a windswept sandbank outside the port of Vlorë.

Mr Prodi's only chance of survival is to undertake a massive reform of the bloated, inefficient welfare state by the end of the year. His government is willing, but the party on which he depends for his majority in the

lower house of parliament, Rifondazione Comunista, opposes any cuts in public spending in the name of monetary union.

Two likely scenarios present themselves. According to the first, the impasse continues, Italy is left out of Europe and the government falls. According to the second, the Prodi government draws up a welfare reform programme, Rifondazione votes against and a crisis looms. The centre-right opposition then comes to the rescue, offers to vote for the welfare reform package but insists on the government's resignation as the price.

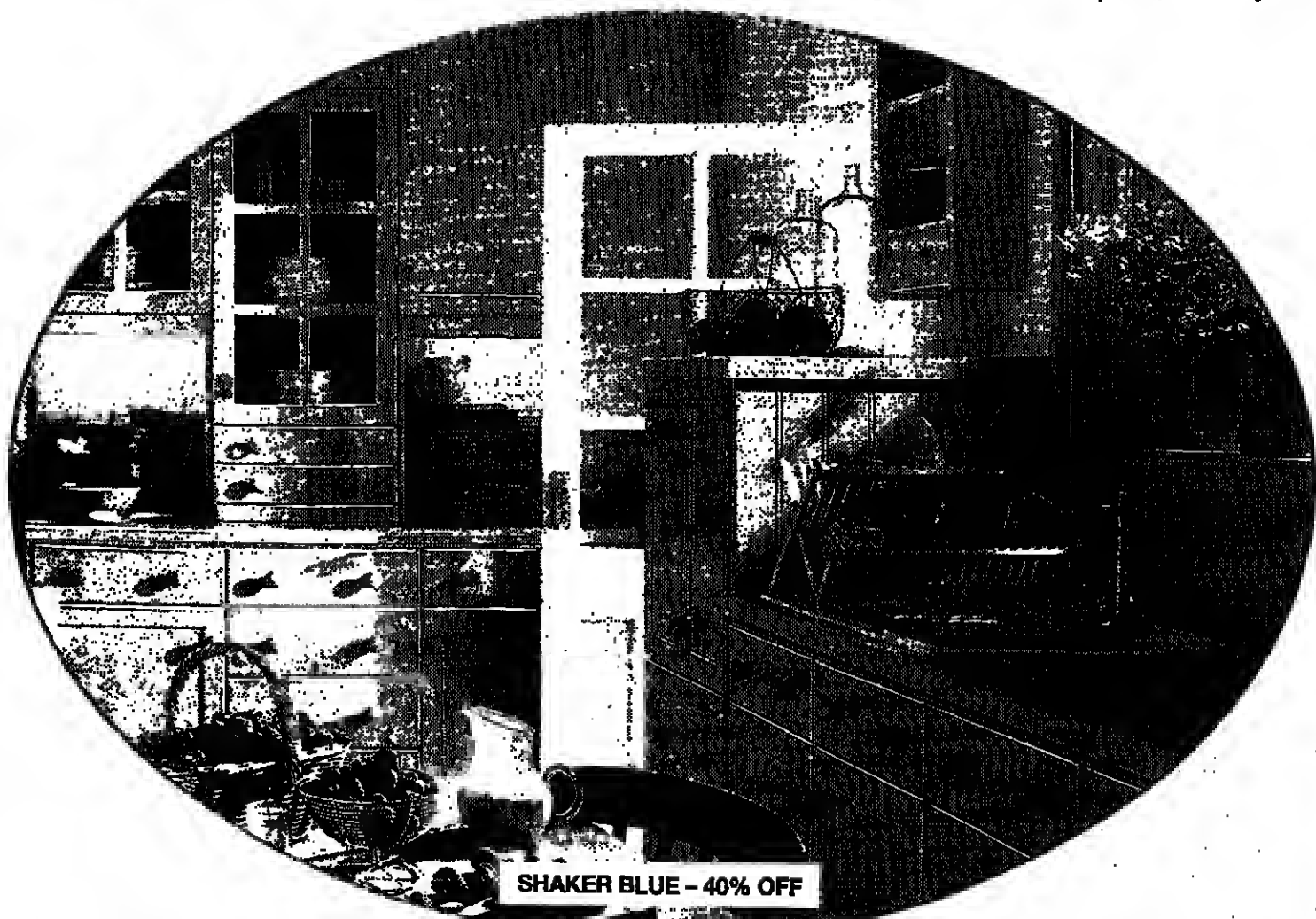
Either way, Mr Prodi's days are numbered. Whether Italy's prospects in Europe can be salvaged while his supporters set about the task of dumping him remains to be seen.

Leading article, page 17

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Saddam's clan get full treatment at Uday's bedside

Patrick Cockburn

It was a tense meeting. Earlier this year Saddam Hussein, gathered the closest member of his family — the inner core of his regime — around the hospital bedside of Uday, his eldest son, paralysed by a bullet in the spine after an assassination attempt last December.

The Iraqi leader told his relatives who had come to the Ibn Sina hospital that their "craving for people's property" had become the talk of Iraq. He said their behaviour was damaging him and his regime. Pointing to Ali Hassan al-Majid, a cousin of the Iraqi leader famous for his brutality, the President said he had "played an important role in prompting me to make the decision to enter Kuwait". And once installed as governor of Iraq's new, 19th province, in 1990, he said: "You looted half the valuables looted in Kuwait". He reminded Ali Hassan he was once "a driver in Kirkuk".

Others got an equally rough ride. Half-brother Sabawi was meant to be a director of the security services but "he goes to his office at 11am, half asleep". President Saddam uttered vague threats against his other half-brother Barzan, Iraq's ambas-

sador in Geneva since 1988, saying: "I should not have left him all this time." Even Uday, facing a dangerous operation to remove the bullet in his body, is asked: "Are you a politician, a trader, a people's leader or a playboy?"

The transcript of the meeting was first published by the London-based magazine *al-Wasat* and has become the subject of intense discussion among Iraqi opponents of the regime. Who leaked the document, and why? President Saddam himself is the most likely culprit. His criticisms seem carefully scripted to show many of the nastier episodes in Iraq's recent history were not, as had been imagined, the fault of Saddam Hussein himself, but of his greedy relatives.

For instance, Gen Omar al-Hazaa, a member of the Iraqi leader's clan known for his denunciations of the regime when in his cups at the officers club in Baghdad, was executed in 1990. Saddam Hussein was blamed. But this turns out to have been unfair. Addressing Ali Hassan al-Majid, the Iraqi leader says: "It was you and Hussein Kamel [another son-in-law murdered last year when he unwisely returned to Baghdad from exile in Amman] who



Goldfinger: A lavishly dressed Uday recovering after his operation in the Ibn Sina hospital in Baghdad. Photograph: AP

caused me to execute Omar al-Hazaa and his sons". It was they who had the house of Gen Hazaa in Baghdad demolished by a bulldozer.

On the face of it, the Iraqi leader is past rehabilitation. So what good will it do him? The President may not know the extent to which he has entered Western demonology. A Palestinian leader who met him before the Gulf War discovered he did not know he had appeared on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek*. He excitedly asked the Palestinian to get copies of the magazines from his hotel.

There may be a more subtle message in the leaked document. President Saddam may want to emphasise that his relatives are as bad as he is, in case anybody should think of replacing him by them. There is a note of self-pity which also seems authentic. In the case of the killing of Omar al-Hazaa, whose tongue was reportedly cut out after his death, he says: "It will always be said that Saddam did that; people will not say that Ali Hassan and Hussein Kamel did it."

President Saddam throws an interesting light on the politics

of his inner family. He relates how the governor of Kirkuk, a city in north-east Iraq, telephoned him because he had stopped trucks smuggling grain into Iran. These turned out to belong to Ali Hassan al-Majid. Another target is his third half-brother Waiban, former interior minister, shot through the leg by Uday at a drunken party on the banks of the Tigris in 1995. He says: "The Interior Ministry was ruined during your term". President Saddam mentions that he had fined him, presumably for corruption.

Up until 1995 Saddam Hussein's family seemed determined to stick together. Then Uday shot his uncle Waiban through the leg and Hussein Kamel fled to Jordan. He was killed on his return last year. Five months ago a relative of Gen al-Hazaa told gunmen where they could find Uday one night in Baghdad. He survived, but is crippled.

significant shorts

Clinton starts campaign to expand Nato east

The Clinton administration formally launched its campaign to win US Senate support for Nato enlargement, with the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, ruling out compromise with Russia on a key demand: blocking an alliance security agreement with Moscow. "Russia would also like us to make absolute commitments in the (proposed Russia-Nato) charter about the deployment of nuclear and conventional forces on the territory's new members. But we will not compromise on this issue," she told the Senate Armed Services Committee. Reuters - Washington

Rebels accused of massacre

Zairean villagers said Tutsi-dominated rebels slaughtered many Rwandan Hutu refugees at camps south of Kisangani and old workers said they had reports that up to 55,000 refugees had fled. The villagers, travelling towards Kisangani, said a pitched battle between rebels and refugees accompanied the slaughter on Tuesday at camps near Kasene village, 25 km (15 miles) south of Kisangani. Reuters - Lusaka

Embattled politician backed

Thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jews in black hats and suits rallied yesterday in support of the religious-party leader Arich Deri, the only politician expected to be charged in a high-level influence-trading scandal. "If he was guilty, all the others would have been guilty," said Yehuda Cohen, a 16-year-old seminary student. "This is discrimination against a religious man." Mr Deri, leader of the religious Shas party, is expected to be indicted on extortion charges. The Attorney-General said there was not enough evidence to charge the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, or the Justice Minister, Tzachi Hanegbi, who were also linked to the scandal. AP - Jerusalem

Cultists trained in Russia

Members of the Japanese Aum Shinri Kyo doomsday cult, which is accused of staging a deadly nerve-gas attack on Tokyo subways, underwent military training in Russia, a Russian investigator said yesterday. Senior investigator Boris Uvarov, of the state prosecutor's office, said a "whole chain of generals" used to arrange military workouts for wealthy foreigners at army bases in the years that followed the Soviet collapse. Aum used the opportunity to provide certain members with combat training, he said. The Russian generals "leased their practice grounds for alleged touring programmes. Foreigners enjoy firing the Kalashnikov sub-machine-gun, flying our helicopters, parachute-jumping — suit yourselves, just pay," Mr Uvarov said. AP - Moscow

Floodwaters recede

The level of muddy floodwater crept downwards yesterday, helping a National Guard sandbagging blitz save a power station that keeps a few lights burning brightly in what remains of this submerged city. The Red River has been falling since early Tuesday and was down to 53.5 feet (16.3m) yesterday, said the US Geological Survey. AP - Grand Forks, North Dakota

Hostage relatives end visit

Relatives of Western tourists kidnapped by Kashmiri separatists nearly two years ago ended their four-day visit to Kashmir valley yesterday with little success in learning the hostages' fate. "We don't know the truth whether the hostages are alive or dead. That's the position of the government as well," Julie Mangan, whose husband, Keith Mangan, is among the missing men, told reporters. AP - Srinagar

Ciller warns off military

The Deputy Prime Minister, Jansu Ciller, yesterday told the military to stay out of politics. Turkey's military, which sees itself as the guardian of the country's secular tradition, has been at loggerheads for months with the Islamic-led government. Ms Ciller, whose True Path party is part of the Islamic-led coalition government, said in a speech that "politics is the job of elected politicians". AP - Ankara

Race-attack Germans jailed

A German court yesterday sentenced two young thugs to 15 and eight-year jail terms for a racist attack on Italian building workers which left one of the victims paralysed and barely able to speak. The court in Potsdam near Berlin found both men guilty of attempted murder for attacking the Italians with a baseball bat in the town of Trebbin last September after setting out on what the presiding judge called a "real manhunt". Reuters - Potsdam

Pulitzer columnist critical

The Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Mike Royko, whose commentaries appear in newspapers across the United States, was in critical condition yesterday after suffering a seizure at his home, a hospital said. Reuters - Chicago

Yeltsin signs China friendship treaty

Helen Womack
Moscow

Russia turns eastward to forge new friendship after failing to halt Nato plans

Russia and China, closer now than at any time since the doomed Sino-Soviet alliance of the 1950s, yesterday issued a joint declaration on strategic co-operation for the 21st century. They denied they were uniting against any particular country but, in calling for a "multi polar world" in which no nation played a dominant role, they

clearly implied criticism of the United States, the only remaining superpower.

The historic agreement was signed when the Chinese president Jiang Zemin met Boris Yeltsin in the gilded hall of the Grand Kremlin Palace. "We have not signed such a document with any other country," said Mr Yeltsin, who has been

trying to diversify Russian foreign policy since failing to persuade Nato against the need for eastward expansion.

The 66-year-old Russian leader lacked his usual verve at the signing ceremony, but Michael De Bakay, the American surgeon who acted as a consultant during his heart operation last November, said

that flu was the problem, not further heart trouble.

President Yeltsin and his guest from Peking expressed their "concern over the attempt at enlarging and strengthening military blocs because such a tendency may — aggravate regional and global tension". Instead of this, their declaration said, it was time for a new

world order. "The Cold War has ended. The bipolar system has ceased to exist. The positive trend towards a multipolar world is accelerating. All countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community. No country should seek hegemony, practise power politics or monopolise international affairs."

The extracts of the document which were made available in the press contained few concrete details on how to achieve this goal. But the two presidents stressed the importance of the United Nations, and also called for continuing disarmament.

Today, together with the leaders of the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, they will sign a treaty cutting armed forces along the former Soviet-Chinese frontier.

It was here, 28 years ago, that relations between the two Communist giants reached rock bottom. After Stalin and Mao had worked enthusiastically together in the 1950s, supporting North Korea in its war with the South, the Soviet Union and China became bitter ideological

foes in the 1960s and even came to blows on their common border in 1969.

But Mikhail Gorbachev healed the rift by visiting Peking in 1989 and relations have been steadily warming since. Russia, which has had more success reforming itself politically than economically, is fascinated by China, which has made an economic breakthrough while leaving its monolithic Communist system more or less intact.

The Kremlin hopes to use this week's five-day visit by President Jiang to show the West that, since Nato insists on expanding against its wishes, Russia has no choice but to widen the range of its friendships. China yesterday complained about Bill Clinton's decision to meet the exiled Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama, which it sees as another example of the kind of US moralising which has pushed it into the arms of a less judgmental Russia.

Aides in Mr Yeltsin were at pains to stress, however, that Russo-Chinese co-operation stopped short of a formal alliance and was not aimed against any third country. "The very suggestion of plans to create some counter blocs are wrong and counter productive," said the Kremlin spokesman, Sergei Yastrzhembsky.

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Death of ideology is greatly exaggerated



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Not even the most numb-kneed Tory party sycophant would call John Major an original thinker. Why? Because you would put in the same category as Arthur Balfour or Lord Salisbury. Paddy Ashdown, likewise, is not someone who comes across as a conceptualiser. When we wrote, not critically, that the Liberal Democrats were a party with many ideas rather than an ideology, Conrad (Lord) Russell took us to task, claiming lineal descent from John Stuart Mill. If so, the party has descended through various rustic branch-lines: its family resemblance to its famous predecessor is less marked than Lord Russell's to his. Mr Ashdown does not spend much time debating the essence of democratic liberalism or liberal democracy for that matter.

The Labour leader is another matter. Tony Blair is no continental intellectual. We do not breed party leaders with the theoretical clout of, say, the former German social democratic leader Helmut Schmidt or the academic weight of the French socialist Lionel Jospin. Yet before the demands of electioneering took him over, Mr Blair could be spied at seminars convened by the Institute of Public Policy Research and similar think-tanks. Then, the occasional "ism" could be heard tripping off his tongue even if, somewhat too often, it emerged as the vague "communitarianism". But the campaign has in large measure seen the

Labour leader staying safely away from big ideas and keeping his bat straight. Until, that is, the past couple of days. Suddenly Tony Blair seems to have been cut loose. He has taken to the stage without a script, doing something extraordinary, in the terms in which this campaign has been conducted till now, which is thinking aloud. What his audiences have been hearing is a kind of public meditation - Prince Hal-like - on the duties of leadership and his rendezvous with history. Taken at face value (too much should not be read into what is said during these hectic days), his recent remarks suggest Mr Blair has yet more surprises in store for his party, including perhaps its intellectual demise.

The gist of Mr Blair's political thought was captured yesterday in his prediction that "this election will be the last fought on ideology". By "ideology" he meant the old way of dividing right and left on how large a role they accord the state. On one side stood individualists, on the other collectivists; on one capitalists, on the other socialists.

That such division is anachronistic is an old suggestion. At the end of the 1950s Daniel Bell used the phrase to signal the onset of an era in which everyone accepted the existence of the welfare state. Other writers took up the theme, claiming that modern politics was essentially a technocratic affair in which all the public had to do was decide which party would manage the system

best. Tony Blair seems attracted by this idea. Appraise my suitability - he implies - on the basis of my party management skills. Perhaps he has been reading Francis Fukuyama, American author of the cloudy *The End of History*. Fukuyama argued that at the end of the Cold War, a liberal-democratic model of politics now rules mankind, conflicts within which are essentially trivial. There remain practical problems, to be sure, in economic and social life but these are dully second-order ones, which need to be approached pragmatically. Fukuyama's book was a strange mixture of triumphalism and gloom. It was

heavily influenced by Nietzsche (this newspaper is against Nietzsche) but was, in its turn, heavily influential on a rising generation which believes that all is management, nothing is ideology. Support what works; that's it. This, in essence, is what President Clinton was saying in his State of the Union address earlier this year.

No one sensible is against practical solutions or good management. But it is a dangerous leap to think that, therefore, politics in the old sense is dead. However it is labelled, and wherever it is conducted, from ancient Athens to contemporary Seoul, politics

exists because society involves conflict. There is conflict for power, resources and freedom. There is conflict between groups and individuals, some of whom will win and some lose. Politics is a grown-up art because politics recognises this and doesn't shy from it: only in the schmaltzy dreamland of dictators and king-emperors is there no conflict, a harmonious and happily managed people. So long as there are limited resources and complex social organisation, with power centralised and rules imposed, there will be politics.

And the real problem for modern politicians is this: without ideology, without an intellectual template, how do you know which groups should win and which, at least relatively, lose? How do you make sense of a chaos of small managerial dilemmas? Without a compass, how do you know where you are going? Tory nationalists have an ideology, which defends traditional centres of national power against globalisation. They may be wrong-headed but they will be able to know when they are winning. The same went for the old left. But what is the core political focus for the new centre-left, whether it be American Democrats or British New Labour?

We think the key idea is, or ought to be, radicalism, meaning a determination to break down excessive centres of power (which could be in European bureaucracies, trade unions, multinational corporations, media empires or

pension funds) in favour of the small guy. Radical politics would recognise that in the global market there is a natural tendency for power to cluster around fewer and fewer players; and that the proper role for politicians is to stand against that, to constantly shake up and break up in order to protect social diversity and mobility. It may seem an abstract thought. In government, it wouldn't be. We are all for management; but every management needs a guiding purpose.

Lachrymal Latins

The exam results were posted at the Brussels Academy yesterday, and one member of the Class of '99 has dissolved in tears. Italy, the country that gave us the Roman Empire, Michaelangelo and the *cappuccino*, has failed to clear the first hurdle for entry to the University of the Euro. The only other country which does not appear on the "pass" list posted by the European Commission is Greece, the school drop-out. They were only mock exams, of course, and there were cries that the teachers had been too soft. But they were a dry run for life-altering tests coming very soon; and on them, the future of the continent may rest.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hospitals fail to accept the fact of death

Sir: It was with great sadness and depressing familiarity that we read John Hoyland's account of his stepfather's final illness ("Thanks, NHS, for a rotten way to die", 22 April), endured in the context of a health service seemingly ill-equipped to deal with the complexities of illness in old age.

As health professionals specialising in the care of older people we recognise the failings of a service where measures of "success" are increasingly based on performance rather than quality, and attention to detail is eclipsed by the pressure to "get the job done".

It is tempting to lay blame at the door of health professionals, managers or even politicians, but to do so would be missing the point. Mr Hoyland's account is more an indictment of our attitudes to ageing, and the inadequacies of the NHS are perhaps a paradigm of the ageism which abounds in society.

DR MARTIN VERNON
SUSAN JACKSON
Newbury Park, Essex

Sir: I would like to endorse John Hoyland's moving article about his stepfather's illness with regard to the total inability of the NHS to acknowledge the fact of death.

An elderly tenant whom we looked after in the final years of his life went into hospital about six weeks ago with bronchial pneumonia. After a few days he contracted an infection and was moved to an isolated ward. After a few days in hospital it was quite clear to us that he was dying. On one occasion we made an inquiry as to his condition. "Oh he's doing fine, he's sitting up, he's making good progress," said the staff nurse.

When we went in to see him later that day we found him, indeed, sitting up, but with all sorts of tubes coming out of him and an oxygen mask over his face. A few days later we were told, "Oh he's a bit poorly today" as if he had a mild touch of the flu. We found him deathly white and in a coma. He died the following day.

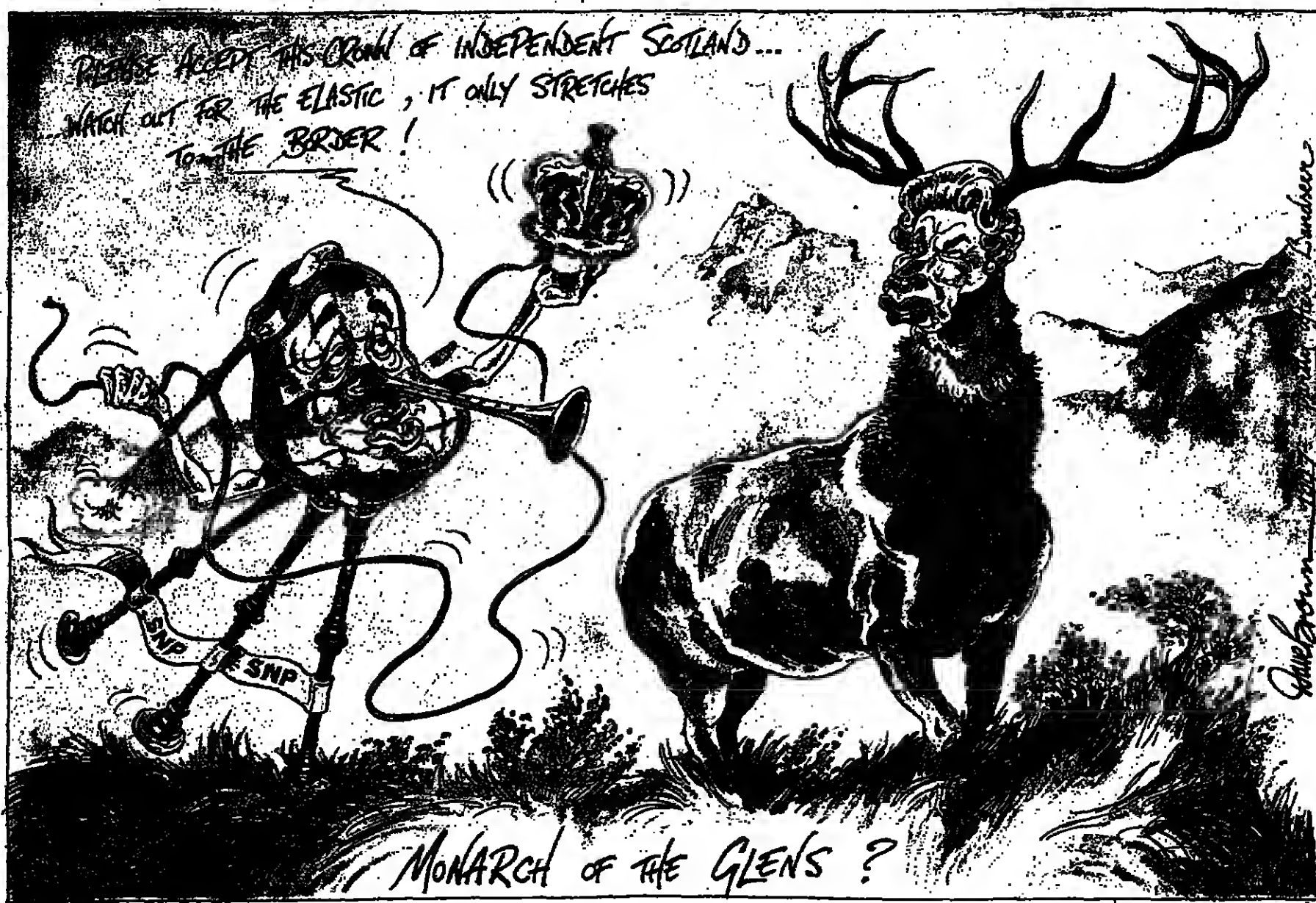
During this period we were also going through a ludicrous charade with the social services to discuss provision for his care when he came out. Like John Hoyland, we found that nobody in the medical and caring services was prepared to accept that (old) people die. This seems to be a reflection of society's inability as a whole to come to terms with the fact of death.

Until we are able to accept that death is an integral part of life, then we will never satisfactorily be able to deal with many of the problems that life itself throws up. And old people will continue to die painful and humiliating deaths.

ROGER LLOYD PACK
London NW5

Sir: John Hoyland's article brought back many painful memories of how my late father, who also suffered from Parkinson's disease, was treated by the NHS.

He suffered for 18 years before he died in 1979 and John Hoyland is exactly right when he states that there is no suitable palliative care outside of the hospice movement. My father was a good amateur athlete in his youth and served in the RAF in the Second World War, but to the NHS he was no more than a guinea pig for treatments that came too late for him and finally a burden. We found him literally tied to a chair in one hospital because they didn't want



him to get bed sores by lying in bed, but had neither the time nor resources to do anything with him.

In the hospital where he was admitted for urgent surgery to a strangulated hernia, he was left without medication and food, urine bottles were left by his bedside for hours as he was unable to make enough fuss for anyone to come and remove them. Finally he was discharged home with abscesses on every such as a result of which he haemorrhaged and was admitted back into ITU as an emergency. We actually received a written apology for that, but it did not alter the fact that he had suffered needlessly.

He died early one Friday evening in a general ward in the middle of visiting time. It was both an inappropriate and undignified way to die. Since then, I have myself worked in the health service, both in administration and clinical work and have to say that there is no training to speak of in dealing with incurables. The whole focus is on treatment at any cost however undignified to the patient.

As a student diagnostic radiographer I saw elderly, desperately ill patients sent for barium enemas when they had no capacity to retain the barium. Inevitably their bowels evacuated and left them embarrassed and distressed beyond words. Hospitals can be very intimidating places and it is hard when you are feeling at your lowest ebb to insist on fair treatment.

There is a huge difference between assisting someone to die and helping them accept death if that is their only option. Is it too much to ask that we show kindness and tolerance towards those whom we cannot cure?

Mrs D E CARTMAN
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

Labour: we won't privatise NHS

Sir: Your article on the failures of the Tories' Private Finance Initiative in the National Health Service ("No escape from privatisation for NHS", 22 April) rightly sets out what a shambles it has been. Not a single brick has been laid for a major hospital scheme, despite constant re-announcements of supposed progress from ministers.

But you wrongly suggest that Labour has embraced the privatisation agenda in the NHS. We haven't.

We do believe it is right and proper to involve the private sector in public/private partnership for the provision of new hospital facilities. But the Tories want to go further, and have openly said that they would welcome the privatisation of clinical services. They are already doing it - at Stonehaven in Scotland and at the Royal Hallamshire in Sheffield. Any such commercial operation of patient care endangers the precious relationship between health professionals and patient - dedicated to the clinical needs of the patient and no other considerations.

On this issue there is a gulf between the two parties.

CHRIS SMITH
Shadow Secretary of State for Health
The Labour Party
London SE17

Some advice on tactics

Sir: I was interested in your reaction to Vanessa Redgrave's decision to vote for me and Bruce Kent's negative response (letter, 21 April). I have to tell him that Ms Redgrave is just one of a large number of people here who have realised that there is no point in voting Labour as they won't make any difference on the issues they consider important. In her case, these are human rights issues; for others it is investment in education or the health service. In each case, the only real difference is between the old parties on the one hand and the Liberal Democrats on the other.

I had a lot of sympathy for tactical voting campaigns at the last election in seats like ours. However, GROT's intervention this time is irrelevant. Everyone knows that the Tories are going to lose here and the debate has moved on to who we want to replace them. Voters must choose between honesty, investment in public services and commitment to human rights on the one hand and a lot of vacuous waffle on the other.

GARETH HARTWELL
Candidate, Breiford and Isleworth Liberal Democrats
Isleworth, Middlesex

I am a Liberal Democrat supporter, especially because of their attitude to the environment and education funding, but at the last general election, here in Rugby, Labour came second. A swing in line with the opinion polls could oust our Tory MP so long as the two main opposition parties do not carve up the remaining votes too equally between them. So I will vote Labour on 1 May, while informally "paired" with Labour friends in Oxford West, who will vote Liberal Democrat as the best chance of unseating John Patten. I will vote Lib Dem in the local election.

This kind of tactical voting is both a principled and serious response to the desperate need to have a government committed to the whole community and not just the haves and have mores. It is made easier because for many of us the differences between Labour and the Liberal Democrats pale into insignificance when contrasted with either of their differences with the Conservatives.

DAVID CHARLES EDWARDS
Rugby, Warwickshire

Sir: Polly Toynbee is correct in asserting that "on the ground each local party wants to win" ("Britain Decides: The Independent's Guide to the Election"). Of course they do. Anyone who's been a candidate has shared that ambition - especially given that it's costing you and your family in terms of lost income, time and stress.

However, she is wrong to call the tactical vote a "blunt instrument for change" - given a reliably

informed local constituency electorate there is no reason why switching to the candidate most likely to beat the Conservative Party of at least 50 seats.

RICHARD DENTON
Co-Chair
Get Rid of Them Tactical Vote Campaign
London N16

Driven away by noisy shows

Sir: Workers have to be offered ear protection when noise levels reach a specified level. Yet the public attending places of "entertainment" can be subjected to painful levels of music and amplified speech.

My family and I have left several cinemas early in the showing of a film because the sound track has been far too loud, and my young daughter was disappointed when we took her to see two different circuses and a superb (except for the sound) international clown display; even using ear plugs, the noise at these events has been painful and, probably, damaging to hearing.

Unfortunately one has to part with one's money before knowing whether a particular venue uses excessively loud amplification and hence has the potential to damage one's health. With studies showing that many teenagers have impaired hearing, why do we exacerbate this problem by permitting dangerous levels of sound in places of public entertainment?

LILIAN SIMLETT-MOSS
Southport, Merseyside

Dangers of TV abortion veto

Sir: As someone who is totally committed to a woman's right to abortion, I find the idea that broadcasters can veto the Pro-Life Alliance election broadcast far more offensive than anything the transmission might contain. This veto sets a far-reaching precedent. Do we really want to encourage the ability of the media to decide for the electorate what those standing in the election can and cannot put forward as part of their case?

Those of us who are pro-choice have nothing to fear from the proposed footage anyway. Our case for legal abortion does not rest on whether the procedure is pleasant or unpleasant. Once termination of pregnancy is placed in the context of a choice between compelling a woman to carry to term a child she does not want to have or allowing her to end that pregnancy, the fact that the procedure, like any other operation, does not look nice, becomes unimportant.

ELLIE LEE
Pro-Choice Forum
Canterbury

Sir: If abortion is a sufficiently decent act to perform, how come it is not a sufficiently decent act to broadcast? Courtesy of (non-fiction) broadcasts, I have seen embalmers working on week-old corpses, seen a man shot in the head, and watched the walking skeletons of those condemned to die by their fellow human beings' greed. Abortion must be a pretty terrible thing.

Dr EMMA FOX
Birmingham

Don't plug racism

Sir: We represent over 250 union members in the Export Credit Guarantee Department on the Isle of Dogs. It is a racially mixed office.

Over three years ago, the British National Party had their candidate, Derek Beackon, elected as a councillor for the Isle of Dogs. The increase of racist literature, stickers and graffiti was paralleled by a 200 per cent increase in racist attacks in the area. Some of our members were victims of these attacks and racial abuse. The rest of our black and Asian members feared the journey from the office to the bus stop or station until the campaign led by the Anti-Nazi League in boot Beackon out was successful in May 1994.

Now with the general election a week away, our members are horrified at the prospect of the British National Party broadcasting to millions across the country this Friday, John Tyndall, the BNP leader, is standing in the Poplar/Canning Town constituency - and already more racist stickers have returned to the Isle of Dogs.

The broadcasters can help to stop them - pull the plug on Friday.

PAT CARMODY
CPSA Branch Assistant Secretary
WENDY LAVINGTON
Trades Union Side
Equal Opportunities Officer
London E14

Blair's secret

Sir: On your front page (23 April) you ask "Why is Tony Blair aping Norman Tebbit?" on Europe.

The answer is simple and clear, not least to Mr Blair and Mr Mandelson. Mr Blair wants to win the election and he knows he can do so only by aping Norman Tebbit.

LORD TEBBIT
House of Lords
London SW1

post-materialism

A serpent in our cool green Eden

Everyone knows that consumer society is destroying the planet, but the politicians realise there are no votes in sacrificing our lifestyles. Or at least not yet, says Richard D North

"Nice fella, no good. Agriculture, probably", thus a cynical politician's judgement on some dull colleague and his ministerial prospects in Harley Granville-Barker's 1926 *Waste*, which is currently reminding Old Vic audiences that nothing much changes in politics. But some things do. Food production has turned out to match traffic as an issue on which people's doubts about modern ways of living worry them. Even so, Granville-Barker's words still apply and he might have added, "Environment, probably", if he wanted to suggest another "B-list" ministry.

None the less, secretaries of state for the environment have been at least middleweights, because the brief includes local government, which always requires a bit of watching. And increasingly, the core issue – the nuisances, large and small, caused by a greedy society – have demanded and even attracted the boss's attention. The latest, John Gummer, has stolen a march which none of his mainstream political opponents have dared to match. It is the sort of move which demonstrates how hard it is for opposition parties to make the highest new issue of the century into the stuff of elections.

Mr Gummer has repeatedly said that it is not the water companies' fault that we are short of water and it is certainly not the fault of the Tories. Climate change, he says, has caused the current dryness, unparalleled in recent times.

The Tories need to demonstrate that when they sold the purveyors of one of the three great natural resources (the others being air and soil), it was the prelude – as the late Nicholas Ridley said it would be – to a period of strict regulation and high investment. Any very recent failings need to be acts of God, lest they be portrayed as deficiencies of administration.

But Mr Gummer's was an important political remark. As a statement of whether we face environmental catastrophe because of our gaseous emissions, it is a little ahead of the scientific consensus. Still, Mr Gummer might be right and is in any case sending the right, slightly alarmed, signals. Global warming, like so many other issues in the environment, is a question of risk, and therefore of taking a gamble. His remarks on the matter are the mirror-image of the silly optimism and lack of caution with which, as Agriculture Minister, he made the first tranche of ministerial remarks about BSE.

But of course, even in an unseasonal drought, greening politics goes further than fire-fighting. "The parties and the media are getting the

message that the environment is not a first-order issue," says Stephen Tindale, of the middle-of-the-road Green Alliance, which aims to put the issue at the centre of politics. It is by now the standard mantra, and goes on to point out that public perception is a peculiar animal: polling insists, for instance, that the environment scores more highly than Europe as a concern of the electorate, though they both come way behind the economy, health and education. But that analysis also reveals it as the issue which won't hark, and which unites people within and between parties as one seen to be more moral than political, just as Europe divides people as a matter more emotional than empirical.

It is likely that there are two sources of one's unease about the environment. The first is that our present carelessness may backfire and hurt us, or our children. We might, for instance, want to clean up rivers, or limit some pesticides on these, light green, grounds. By and large, we have done those things which obviously screamed out for attention, and the Tories can claim that they

6 Brundtland said sustainable development's hurdle was democracy

have mostly matched the wider European and Western expectation in such matters. No other party seriously believes the electorate is hungry for big further changes, say in management of the chemical industry, and no other party thinks it has a distinctly different political approach to offer. Unlike most social issues, this is not one that resolves itself into a matter of how much to soak the rich to help the disadvantaged. Most environmental improvements would impinge on rich and poor about equally, perhaps on the poor more.

The latest second issue is far harder to manage. Judaeo-Christianity is often denounced for its language of man's "dominion" over the world. But it has far more signally reminded us that self-denial and frugality are the source of private spirituality and social well-being. Modern affluence has linked with environmental concern and this far older tradition to produce a post-materialism which lurks in many a breast. Hardly a new phenomenon: when H G Wells castigated the "Utopian unworshipfulness of an irresponsible rich man of the shareholding type," he was thinking of the proto-greens, William Morris and John Ruskin. It is tempting to hang the same label on

several modern high-profile greens. But Wells was at least a bit wrong: Morris was a rich man who got richer by purveying a medieval design ethic and wrapping the whole in heartfelt anti-materialism. Laura Ashley, Terence Conran, Anita Roddick, Jonathan Porritt, Greenpeace's Peter Melchett and Friends of the Earth's Charles Secrett would all have to be bundled together to make anything like a new Morris, and even so would have difficulty matching the passion and talent, let alone the profitability, of the Victorian model. But humbug remains the biggest charge against green leaders and most of their followers too.

"I'm interested in ideas," says a young politician in *Waste*. "Then why go into politics?" asks a worldly-wise MP. The piece picks over the perennial matter of whether morality has any place in democracy. It meshes well with Stephen Tindale's reminder that Gro Harlem Brundtland, the Norwegian socialist and official midwife to the idea of sustainable development, once said that her offspring's biggest hurdle was to survive democracy.

Shouldn't greens, like church leaders, press their Utopianism from a position of integrity unsullied by power-seeking? This is the oldest issue in the politicisation of greenery and the value of Jonathan Porritt is that he has renounced conventional green politics because it is too unworshipful, whilst retaining the loftiness which used to attach to difficult hithers. His brand of pained arrogance may irritate many of us, but it is hard to doubt his high seriousness. In his new role as one of the three leaders of the Forum for the Future he is one of several gurus who are winning business round to greenery. Business is, one suspects, more than happy to have them inside the tent. Anything, including being lectured, beats confrontation.

However, even if much greenery – even practical greenery – is vaguely absurd, who is to say that it is not the seed of something which will blossom later? In his fantasy on the socialist and Utopian medieval priest John Ball, Morris writes: "I pondered how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing they fight for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes it turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name." Men do not know the term they do, even when they seek to do good. But equally, the good they do may not become obvious for years. So there is hope for the Green Party even as it speaks a deal of what conventionally sounds like nonsense. Its spokespeople are certainly effortless guardians of the idealist ethic. But in their custodianship of the process which led to the recent Road Traffic Reduction Act and the Home Energy Conservation Act, they can also claim to have been important in the enactment of the only two legislative measures which impose a duty on any authority (actually, only local authorities) to assume that reduced

consumption is something to be encouraged.

The Greens' total vote grew well in all the elections after the first in which they stood, in October 1974. Chris Rose, their national election agent, rather charmingly points out that this is not because the party became more popular, but because it has until this year fielded more candidates each time: "Our share of the vote in constituencies where we stand has remained about the same." Except in the election for the European Parliament in 1989, when the party scored over a fifth of the vote in half a dozen constituencies and nearly 15 per cent of the total, its share has not risen above 1.5 per cent (as against a green vote in Germany which rose to

6 Porritt has renounced green politics as unworshipful while acting like a bishop

7.4 per cent in the Bundestag election of 1994, giving them 49 seats under proportional representation).

The Lib-Dems are probably the most naturally green of the mainstream British parties: composed of mildly affluent urban workers whose politics are a cross between a crusade and a hobby, this was bound to be the case. The Tories have already overseen a deliberate increase in the taxing of petrol, but the Lib-Dems propose to go further, and in exchange to reduce road tax on smaller engines. That is brave because it risks upsetting the party's natural constituency. It appeals only to the better nature of the high-mileage Lib-Dem with the big lump under the bonnet.

Still, it is hard to match John Gummer's statements on traffic, housing and out-of-town

supermarkets. All assume that we may have to curtail our preferred consumption patterns. That is post-materialism by the back door. It is also quite brave: Conservatives naturally enough like firmness best when it applies to the lower orders, not to their own. Perhaps, as a Christian, Mr Gummer is drawn to an area in which private morality must overflow into policy. When Peter Lilley says that his job is not to tax big pay cheques, he then usually adds that their recipients are under a large but private obligation to redistribute their wealth. It is, after all, a bar to the entry to heaven. Green virtue cannot in quite the same way be private.

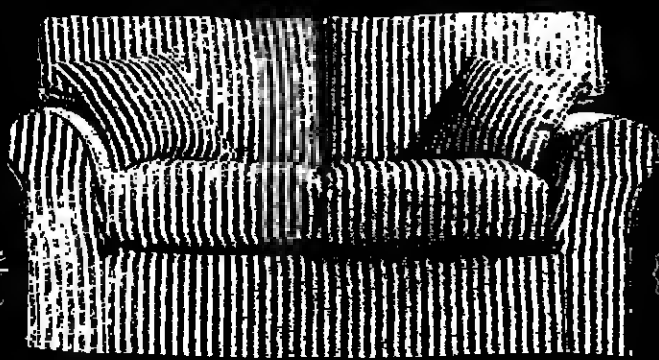
And where is Labour? In Michael Meacher they have a shadow environmental protection minister who seems amiable and serious. It looked a little unwise in him publicly to espouse in mid-campaign a particular environmental cause (that which suggests organo-phosphates are involved in the transmission of BSE) just as he stands a serious chance of receiving the full weight of official evidence on the matter and to be taking on the kind of responsibilities that make banning this or that look rather more complicated than it appears to outsiders. It seems right, on the other hand, to propose, as he does, modestly stricter targets for controlling greenhouse gases.

Mr Meacher seems like the kind of man who would rather read or write a good book than buy a speedboat. But asked whether New Labour was a good child of the spiritual socialism of Morris, who saw that "one must cast away riches and attain wealth", he sighed and smiled mildly. "I have a lot of sympathy with people who want peace and quiet and the opportunity for tranquillity, but they'll always be a minority. Winning elections is a pretty hard-headed business."

It's true: in this century the Western world has convulsed itself to both deny and defend the right in people to be grossly vulgar if they like. They like.



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At last! Shakespeare's long-lost St George

Yesterday was St George's Day. It was also Shakespeare's birthday. But have you ever thought how odd it was that these two great English occasions should be celebrated on the same day? And that there must be some connection between them, however unlikely?

Well, there is! Experts have recently uncovered the remains of a hitherto unknown Shakespeare play which is on the very subject of St George and the Dragon. It is called, as you might expect, *The Two Georges of Smyrna*.

Would you like to see an extract?

You wouldn't?

Well, too bad, because here it is.

The scene is a back street of Smyrna, some time between the invention of Christianity and the modern day. Enter George, a knight errant, with his attendant dragon.

George: We have journeyed many a mile together Before we came to this fair town named Smyrna. And now we seek a place to lay our weary heads, Which is not quite so easy as it sounds. For every door on which we knock for help Has got a sign saying: "Dragons not welcome here". Why do they like you not?
Dragon: I cannot tell. We dragons are a harmless lot, God wot. We puff and blow and make a lot of noise, And cause a little fire from time to time. Why, I myself once burnt a haystack down While laughing at a joke. My gusty breath Being full of sparks did catch a corner of the hay And moments later there was nothing left. But every dragon has a tale like this. Thereafter are we careful with our breath And never cause another fire again. Not so with humankind, whose carelessness

Leaves every town ablaze from time to time.
George: Yes, yes, I know. We humans are to blame For everything that happens in this world. Yet somehow shift the blame to dragons. This is the constant burden of your plaint.
Dragon: And it is true, as you have oft confessed! George: You may be right, but that is not the point.
Dragon: What is the point, oh holy one-to-be, Oh martyr on the make, oh future saint?
George: The point is seeking lodgings for the night, And that would be a simple thing to find Did I not have a dragon at my side!
Dragon: Oh, now I start to catch your general drift! I cramp your style, is what you mean to say! I, who have saved your life so often in the past, Am now a little surplus to your wants! Upon the road I am your trusty friend But here in town a mere embarrassment!



Miles Kingston

George: Now, look, old dragon friend...

Dragon: No, say no more! I'll take your hint and make myself right scarce. I have a cousin here in Smyrna, a dragon like me. With whom I may perchance find room to stay. I'll search him out and bother you no more. Tomorrow you can buy a horse and then You'll look just like a normal knight again.
George: Nay, fair dragon, take not offence at me! We have endured so many dangers, me and thee, That being bound together in a common plight, We should not be parted by a trifling fight.
Dragon: Ye cannot soften me with all this rhyme. Perhaps we'll meet again some other time. The dragon tosses his head proudly and goes off without a second glance. George scratches his head ruefully.

George: Alas, I do repent me of my hasty tongue. Which yet again has far outrun my thought. But night draws on and I have still no bed. And nowhere in Smyrna to lay my weary head. Yet hold! Have I not a long-lost cousin Whose name is also George, here in this town? I think I have! Him will I search for now! Enter a second dragon, who starts on seeing George and then hails him.

2nd Dragon: Why, master, are you here again so soon?
George: What mean you, fool? I've ne'er been here before!
2nd Dragon: Oh, master, that's a sorry tale to tell...

Well, it's quite clear what's going to happen, isn't it? George and the dragon have both got identical cousins in Smyrna and there's going to be a lot of incredibly unfunny mistaken identity before everything is cleared up. So I think we'll quietly lose the manuscript again.

مكتبة من الأصول

the commentators

This is no time to go sour on New Labour

Here we go, the terminal week of this terrible campaign. Each day that passes sees the growing disaffection of Labour supporters complaining that the leadership is clinging ever rightwards. The groundswell of protest is silent, muttered, muted for fear of failure on 1 May. But the danger is that Labour supporters are flagging. Many say they will not vote and others may opt for the Liberal Democrats in places where it is tactically insane. A lot of people are now very angry with Blair, especially over Europe – and they are solid committed New Labour believers, not just the smattering of old socialist warhorses or Granita dilettantes. Day by day residual affection is seeping away and goodwill is turning sour. It can't end too soon.

OK, so I'm voting Labour, but I can't hear to listen to them any more. "If I hear Blair talking about himself one more time, I'll vote Lib Dem. Mc, me, trust me is all he ever says and the more he says it, the less I trust him." It's Clinton all over again.

In a trade union office plastered with Vote Labour posters, I came across one featuring a beaming Blair and the slogan "Britain deserves better", but some malcontent had inked in the words "than him", together with a Hitler moustache. The natives are restive.

Labour strategists reckon their own people have nowhere else to go, but apathy and anger are a real danger: the election is by no means won. Blair on Europe, Blair on law and order, Blair on taxation – yes, Labour supporters are being sorely tried. Yet now, on the brink of victory, is no time for all this angst, anger and apathy. Just close your eyes and think of five more Tory years.

Then ask yourself if really, truly, the campaign could have been different? Could we have had honesty and principle? Probably not. After all, it is not just the politicians who lie, but the voters too. They tell earnest Rowntree Foundation funded researchers that yes of course they would vote for higher taxes to pay for health and education. They tell pollsters health and education are at the very top of the list of priorities, yet all the evidence is that whatever they say to nice people with clipboards, they will not vote for anyone who hints at extra taxes. For all we know, they may at this moment be lying to pollsters in droves about their true voting intentions.

So the parties lie back to them. Both parties are signed up to spending plans that are simply impossible. The independent Institute of Fiscal Studies throws its hands up in despair at the gaping great holes in the budget both swear they will stick to. Labour posters baldly state "NHS waiting lists will be shorter" on the basis of no extra funding at all. Tory posters lie back just as vigorously. The voters protest sanctimoniously about all this mendacity but they are no better themselves: we probably do get the politics we deserve. Few is not the time for a risky experiment in high-minded leadership.

What kind of more uplifting campaign might Labour have fought instead? We all have our wish lists – but would anything else work? The grumbling behind the scenes has rarely erupted in public but one who broke cover last week was Mark Seddon, the young editor of *Tribune*. He wrote an ill-judged call for more radical policies on the leader page of the right-wing *Evening Standard*, of all places to choose.



Polly Toynbee

The party will spring to life on 2 May. The model army will break step and real politics will resume

Of course the paper gleefully headlined it. "The left is just waiting, Mr Blair" and Labour HQ acidly told him his piece was "unhelpful". So, on behalf of those Labour supporters who yearn for a more principled campaign, I went to seek out what an alternative platform might have looked like. Seddon outlined his menu of tempting policies: restore the earnings link for state pensions, cut defence, increase welfare, renationalise rail and water, pay public sector workers their due, borrow more, not worry overmuch about inflation, and, of course, tax the rich more. Fine – but that is the agenda that lost the last four elections. There may be good arguments for many of those policies, but if they make you unelectable, forget it. Those of us who broke with the Labour Party in 1981 to form the SDP left Labour out of despair at the failure of the party to recognise how fast society was changing beneath their feet. Finally, we have a Labour party that understands the meaning of the past 18 years, even if those changes are unpalatable.

Mark Seddon echoes the unhappy sentiments of many Labour supporters when he says, "People would respect Blair if he stood up for what he believed in. You can appeal to the best in people." But what, I ask misanthropically, if there is not enough "best" in them? The working class masses no longer exist. Most people in work are middle class home-owners who are 33 per cent richer than 15 years ago, nurtured on the politics of selfishness. What if nowadays the natural majority is comfortable and selfish? "Then we might as well all give up," Seddon says. But that is no answer.

Some words of comfort to the Labour apathists – all is not as black as it seems. It does not take much investigative journalism to prod beneath the party's iron electoral carapace to find that something is still alive underneath it. Whisper it softly, the truth that dare not speak its name – Labour will spring to life surprisingly on 2 May. Blair's New Model Army that marches so firmly in ranks now will break step and real politics will resume. Once the election is over, Millbank iron-fists will no longer hold sway.

Take the "What's Left" network, for example. It is a loose grouping describing itself as "New Left within New Labour", and it consists of people who will mainly have jobs under Blair: Robin Cook, John Prescott, Clare Short, Jean Causton, Peter Hain, Angela Eagle and some 30 other key players have all attended meetings. Those are not reds under Blair's bed, they are an integral part of the bed he lies on. Deep-throat conversations with some of them reveal an absolute certainty that things will have to be different: the spending plans for instance, are just not sustainable. "More money has to be there by the first real budget in the autumn." Is this sedition? "No. We strongly support New Labour but that doesn't mean we will be blindly obedient." Feel better?

Personally, I believe in Tony Blair. If he succeeds, we should forgive whatever he says now in order to get elected: elections take place in the nether regions of politicians' souls. Come 2 May, we shall see the calibre of a man who says he has a mission to transform society. Meanwhile, remember the election is by no means over – and what is the point of getting your disillusion in first?

Had an extraordinary encounter the other day. I was presenting a radio show, in which a group of Radio 4 listeners had gathered to talk about the most prized books in their collections, under the eye of an eminent antiquarian dealer. On my left sat a pleasant lady from Leicester called Leonie, who had brought along a first edition of *Entertaining Mr Sloane*, the first published work by the Sixties playwright Joe Orton. Was there anything special about it? Yes, she pointed out, it was inscribed on the inside page "To Mum and Dad, From Joe", and was therefore a rare sighting of a presentation copy from the notably informal and anti-conventional gay dramatist.

"But the Joe" of the inscription could be any old Joe," I reasoned with razor-like logic. "Are you sure it's Joe Orton's handwriting?" "Yes I am," she said. Why? "Because I'm his sister," she said shortly.

A curious kind of fastidiousness overtakes you at moments like this. Your desire to interrogate any family connection of such a brilliant writer and wayward spirit is mitigated by a reluctance to seem merely nosy about a man who was murdered by his lover in 1967.

So it was only later that I ventured to ask why was the inscription "From Joe" so bloodless? Why not "Love, Joe"? Because, she said, they were an unhappy family. Their father, William, was weak and put-upon, "and our mother," said Leonie, "was awful to us".

That much we knew already, in fact, from John Lahr's biography of Orton, *Prick Up Your Ears*, which describes how Elsie Orton would vent her frustration and dislike on her family. But then Leonie began to laugh, a weird, indulgent cackle as if talking about a naughty child.

According to Mary Kenny, in *Goodbye to Catholic Ireland*, published next week, one

"She used to make us porridge in the morning, it came steaming hot out of this saucepan. I remember sitting there in front of the bowl saying 'I don't want it', as children will, and my mother came past and shoved my head into it." At what age? "I must have been about five", she said with the same crazy laugh. "I said to my sister Marilyn the other day, 'Do you think we were abused as children?' She said, 'Don't be so daft, of course we were.'"

What happened to Marilyn? "Once my mother banged her head against the mangle in the kitchen and knocked her out." Picking my way through Leonie's eldritch chuckling, I said, "You mean she grabbed her daughter by the head and..."

"No, no," said Leonie. "She had this lovely long hair. My mother put it through the mangle." Until she was unconscious? She nodded. Her eyes were wild. She seemed hugely amused, as by some terrible scene of black humour. Forty-five years after the event, it was still as clear to her as last night's television: a sister tortured by her mother – and a whole nervous lifetime of defensive laughter.

Unhappy families: the wedding of Leonie, sister of the playwright Joe Orton, in 1964



Unhappy families: the wedding of Leonie, sister of the playwright Joe Orton, in 1964



Talking dirty: bold and beautiful Ms Wolf, the talk of Gay Byrne's 'The Late Late Show'

"defining moment of cultural change" in the mid-Sixties was the episode that became known as "the Bishop and the Nightie". It happened on *The Late Late Show*, Ireland's Friday night two-and-a-half-hour chat show hosted by the fox, white-haired Gay Byrne, in February 1966.

Part of the programme was devoted to a marital quiz, on the lines of the American *Mr and Mrs* game show: a husband and wife were questioned separately about their own and their spouse's likes, dislikes, hobbies, views and so on. A Mrs Eileen Fox was asked what colour nightdress she'd worn on her wedding night. She said she couldn't remember – maybe she hadn't worn one at all. Laughter and applause from the audience; but all hell followed from the Catholic Church.

The Bishop of Clonfert condemned the show from the pulpit of Loughrea Cathedral. The papers went bananas. Educational committees and sports authorities denounced *The Late Late Show* as "dirty". The *Irish Catholic* magazine called Mrs Fox's sweet little confession "a public discussion of bedroom relations between married couples".

Ms Kenny tells it most amusingly, and sees it as the start of a media revolution that would "remove all modesty from discussion about physical matters". To prove her point, she need look no further than last Friday's *The Late Late Show* (still hosted by the indefatigable Mr Byrne) where Naomi Wolf, the feminist author and dreamboat dilted on her new book *Promiscuities*. Friends in Dublin report that the city's population spent the weekend discussing little else than Ms Wolf's clitoris which came up, so to speak, a dozen times in discussion.

Emboldened by Gay Byrne's anything-goes insouciance, she asked "Can I mention blow-jobs?" and talked breezily about how good you had to be at *fellation*

Intimate words with Naomi: it's enough to turn an Irish bishop's head

john walsh

when she was a teenager, while the older gentlemen of the RTE audience sat in silent wonder.

A priest in the audience asked a question about Catholic youth and promiscuity: in return, Mr Byrne asked him if he had anything to contribute to the earlier discussion. "I, er, haven't really had much experience of clitorises," said the priest sheepishly. What, you can't help wondering, would the Bishop of Clonfert have made of that?

News comes in from New York that thousands of citizens face having their lives disrupted in the most inconvenient way. Chaos stares them in the face. Horror grips the souls of Manhattan's rich apartment-dwellers as they face the unimaginable prospect that the city's doormen may go on strike.

No really, it's true. Discussions are still under way to stop 30,000 "building workers" from downing their Big Macs and copies of *Rustler* magazine and working to rule. They are striking for more money for themselves, and for a lower starting salary for new workers, which are modest enough demands.

What seems hilarious to a British ear is the level of panic among residents who will suddenly have to do things even rich flat-owners in London take for granted: sorting the mail, delivering it to your own door, calling a taxi, changing a lightbulb, taking out refuse sacks, allowing estate agents in – and most of all, a frightfully complicated manoeuvre called "watching the front door".

This, as British visitors to New York will know, means that, should you dare enter



an apartment block and head for the lifts without telling him whom you're calling on, a fat trucker in a uniform will start yelling at you. The only things they ever say are "OK, I wanna see some I.D." and (into the telephone) "Mrs Rheinhold! There's a guy down here says he knows va..."

They are a spectacularly office breed, but also spectacularly out of date in a modern city. I mean, how else can you think of their proposed action than as a mass walkout of butlers and footmen?



New York doorman: how will the rich cope if they strike?

Polling: it's broke, but how do we fix it?

Inadequate methods and unreliable respondents are challenging pollsters, says Conrad Jameson

The sharply contradictory findings will be seen as evidence of volatility among the voters," read the desperate front page of yesterday's *Daily Telegraph*, trying to explain away a rise in Labour's lead to 21 points in its own Gallup Poll on the same day that ICM reported Labour's lead shrinking to five points in *The Guardian*. But it isn't the shaking and quaking of a volatile electorate that you hear in the polls – not, certainly, for two polls with near identical dates for fieldwork. The noise is rather the clatter and clang of an old banger of a sample survey technique that, after breaking down in the last general election, should never have been allowed out without an MOT.

Last time the polls crashed so hard that it was surprising that any pollsters got out alive. Polls had been wrong in three post-war elections. But here was something else. They didn't just pick the wrong party. They missed, on average, by nine points, equivalent to more than double the 4.3 per cent swing that Labour needs in this election to win its biggest victory since 1945.

Its gasket blown, its tyres flat, the clapped-out opinion poll needed an upgraded replacement, featuring long, cross-examining questionnaires, panels for tracking opinion over time and experiments to find out which issues and personalities really do flip voting intentions. What did the public get instead? Minor repairs passed off as a major overhaul.

The most learned-sounding repair was the phoniest: a revision of the

sampling technique to get rid of a built-in Labour bias. The culprit was supposed to be the cheap-and-cheerful quota sample, which told interviewers how many, say, skilled, blue-collar workers to interview but left them to pick and choose respondents within the quota itself. Since quotas left too much discretion, finger-wagged *The Economist*, tighter samples were needed – so that within a sample of blue-collar workers, there should also be quotas for, say, the numbers of them who lived in council flats.

Gallup was applauded by *The Economist* for replacing quotas last January with the classical pinprick random sample that nowadays can be done cheaply by telephone. But why did Labour bias in quota samples only show up in 1992? Quotas actually replaced the more expensive random samples in the 1970s. And where was the evidence that the bias was the result of quotas? It wasn't to be found. The Market Research Society took two years to admit the conclusion of its own post-mortem: hardly a quarter of the error in the 1992 election could be put down to slovenly quotas.

Even more unconvincing was the beguiling reassurance that the polls had only been caught short by a last-minute swing – quite possibly caused by people telling pollsters they were optimistic about the economy, and their wage packets. But that explanation couldn't be right. At the last election optimists in the polls never outnumbered pessimists. But this time

optimists are a thumping majority – and Labour is still in front. And why should polls get caught out by a last-minute swing? The survey that the polls' reputation stand or fall by is held on the eve of the election, when voters are practically inside the voting booth.

So just why were polls off last time by a whopping nine points? All of us, lay and professional alike, know the answer. Poll respondents were lying. It was bad enough in the Seventies and Eighties. That's when voters

Downright lying is something new and typical of the Nineties

fipped out of their class-bound goldfish bowls that, in happier days, made their voting behaviour so much easier to predict. Studies started showing voters slithering back and forth between parties or swarming away with a "don't know" or "refuse to answer". The changelings and copycats are still with us – with heavy "don't know" scores still flashing a danger warning. Most polls show them at 20 to 30 per cent. And pollsters are not known, too, in that they don't know which way the "don't know" will flip. That, no doubt, is why "don't know" scores are so rarely published.

But downright lying is something new and typical of the Nineties – that is why new dark clouds of doubt hang over pollsters' performance. Lying is so new that, pretend as they might, they don't know how to deal with it. Volatility should, in theory, cancel out in eve-of-election polls. More difficult to deal with are the evasions of Essex Man who likes to pretend he lives in Hampstead. How are pollsters to figure out how many are lying, and which way?

For feisty Bob Worcester of MORI the problem doesn't exist. The pollster's Panglossian assumption stays intact: people mean what they say and say what they mean. Ask well-boned questions in a proper sample, he argues, and, lo, you come out with MORI's impressive forecast of the South Wirral landslide, off only by two points for the Tories and only one point for Labour.

But do voters lie less at by-elections? And what explains MORI's own fiasco in the 1992 election? Or scores that have popped up in several recent surveys asking people how they voted last time, which show Labour won the last election? Or, even funnier, the exit polls at the last election showing a majority favouring Labour's fatal policy of increasing taxes for more welfare services?

Listen to Nick Sparrow of ICM, for whom the L-factor exists, all right, but that's no bother. It can be whisked away by a statistical lie-detector test that happens to be ICM's own patented invention. Unfortunately,

the panel data that ICM uses for adjusting its polling scores can't be scrutinised, only ICM's impressive redactions – when ICM asked people how they voted last time it came out with scores jolly close to the actual 1992 results.

But when says that success in redaction means success in prediction as well? And why, if the lie detector test is so important, does it change the scores published in *The Guardian* yesterday by only a single percentage point, with Labour rising to a six-point rather than a five-point lead after adjustments?

The truth is that pollsters cannot possibly know how to adjust for lying – assuming, of course, that adjustment is needed – until after another general election or two, when new statistical and questionnaire techniques have been tested.

So what are we poor punters supposed to do with our hand-wringing doubts amid shrill claim and counter-claim? Tony Simpson of the Harris poll gives the kindly answer to the tune of a belly laugh: live with them – and don't bet. With that sound advice – plus a hint from Aristotle about knowing the exactitude each type of inquiry allows – we can still make out heads from tails, say, by making allowances ourselves for how many of the "don't know", for example, are crypto-Tories. Look at the record. We've as good a chance of getting it right as the pollsters.

The writer is the retired managing director of a market research firm.

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CWS threatens legal action as Regan returns boxes of confidential information to the High Court

Co-op to press for hefty damages

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

The Co-operative Wholesale Society went on the offensive against Andrew Regan's Lantica Trust yesterday, saying it would press for "substantial damages" against the 31-year-old entrepreneur and his "fellow conspirators".

The move came after Mr Regan returned seven boxes of confidential CWS information to the High Court. The material had been obtained with the help of Allan Green, the former retailing controller of the CWS who was suspended last week. The CWS said Mr Regan was then using the information to prepare to launch an audacious £1.5bn break-up bid for the 130-year-old movement.

The boxes contained a

months, Allan Green was systematically stealing documents to order and it appears that he was encouraged to do that by Mr Regan and David Lyons [Mr Regan's right-hand man]. [They] then used that for their own purposes."

In a string of abusive letters sent to Mr Regan, his fellow directors and his advisers, the CWS lambasts the young entrepreneur's tactics and his ethics.

A letter from the CWS chief executive, Graham Melmoth, said: "Mr Green stole an enormous quantity of documents -

also asks when Hambros was shown the confidential information and why it did not question how they were obtained. "Did any of you people ask Mr Regan: where did these documents come from - and how were they obtained? If not why not?"

In an attempt to diffuse the situation, David Lyons sent a letter to every member of the CWS board trying to call off the legal wrangle. It said: "I am writing to ask you whether, in preference to continued legal proceedings, it would be in the best interests of members to re-

etries, will voice their support for the CWS at its annual meeting next month.

Meanwhile the CWS denied that it was still operating a surveillance operation on Mr Regan and his advisers. The Regan team claims they are still being followed and are being filmed. The CWS says it called off the security firm Control Risks on Friday.

However, it has emerged that Control Risks was not the first firm approached. The CWS went to rival firm Kroll Associates first but found that they were already looking into Regan's affairs for another party. It is understood that Kroll had been hired by Allied Irish Banks, which Mr Regan had lined up to buy the Co-op Bank if his break-up bid was successful.

Nomura International has emerged as Mr Regan's main backer and is prepared to fully underwrite £1.2bn of debt finance for his bid. This would see Co-op members receive a cash payment of £1,000 each. The Co-op Union would receive £10m to give to "good causes".

One source close to the bid camp said: "The Co-op is now in play. If Regan does not get, someone else will."

The CWS and the Regan camp are due in court tomorrow where Justice Lightman will decide whether or not the injunction banning the use of confidential information should be lifted.

The CWS says it will ask the court to make the interim injunction permanent.

Comment, page 21

Allan Green stole documents to order and it appears he was encouraged ... by Mr Regan

they fill seven large boxes ... Could you please tell us what reward or inducements were offered to Allan Green?"

In his affidavit, Mr Green admits to meeting Mr Regan six of seven times between September last year and this April. "I unreservedly accept that I exceeded my authority and was in breach of my obligations as an employee," he said. Mr Regan said that material was copied and sent back by courier to Mr Green's home.

The CWS also despatched letters to Mr Regan's financial and legal advisers questioning their integrity. The letter to Lord Hambro, chairman of Hambros Bank, describes Mr Green as "a common thief". It

reveals details of the proposal and allows them to reach a decision. "This was treated to a contemptuous response from Lennox Fyfe, the CWS chairman."

He said: "You mention the legal proceedings. Let me make the position clear. We intend to press on with those proceedings and to secure a judgment for substantial damages against you and your fellow conspirators ... As for your proposal, I have given instructions that it should be returned to you unopened and unread."

The CWS maintains that its board is unanimous in its opposition to Mr Regan's break-up bid. It says that its corporate members, the regional soci-



Heading for the High Court: Boxes of information obtained by Allan Green, the suspended CWS man, at the offices of the Co-op lawyers Linklaters and Paines

Retail sales up again as exports dive

Diane Coyle
and Chris Godsmark

The two-speed economic recovery was emphasised by figures yesterday showing buoyant high street sales and a sharp fall in manufacturers' export orders.

With the Bank of England urging an increase in interest rates to cool the economy despite the strong pound, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) yesterday pleaded for higher taxes instead. Otherwise, it warned, Britain would face a further rise in the value of the pound and a plunge in export confidence.

Andrew Buxton, the chairman of the CBI's economic affairs committee, said economic policy should be tightened "sooner rather than later", and preferably through higher taxes. "The problem one risks with interest rates is that it will make the pound stronger even more," he said.

The CBI's comments came as the minutes of the meeting between Kenneth Clarke and Eddie George last month showed that the Governor of the Bank of England called once again for a quarter point rise in the cost of borrowing. If the move was delayed, "more substantial tightening would eventually become unavoidable," Mr George warned.

Although the Chancellor said he and Mr George agreed to differ by a quarter point, most analysts expect whoever has the job after the election to increase interest rates.

This expectation was reinforced by figures for retail sales last month and by the home market aspects of the CBI's quarterly survey of industrial trends.

The volume of sales on the high street rose by 1.3 per cent, and in the latest three months their annual growth rate has picked up to 4.4 per cent. Food sales are growing far more slowly than the rest. Annual growth in sales of non-food items has reached 6.9 per cent, with clothing and footwear especially strong in March.

"This is before the tax cuts, the windfall gains and the election. There is every reason to expect it to pick up further," said Clavin Barr, an economist at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

The CBI survey showed that home orders, although below expectations, remained at their highest rate for two years. Companies predicted their home order books would grow over the next four months at the brisk rate since October 1988.

Despite job losses in the latest quarter, manufacturers said they would increase employment in the next four months for the first time since 1989.

But the strong pound, which has risen by 25 per cent against the German mark in six months, became the biggest constraint on export optimism, for the first time since the depths of the recession in 1981. Export optimism was at a six-year low.

The strong pound also meant that manufacturers' unit costs are expected to fall at the fastest rate since the CBI began its survey.

Some City analysts saw the survey as evidence that there is no inflationary danger. But others said it was misleading to focus on manufacturing.

City PR man witnessed £2.4m payment to Zimet

Nigel Cope

The document which authorised the controversial £2.4m payment by Andrew Regan to a Cayman Islands middleman was witnessed by a leading City public relations adviser, it emerged yesterday.

The name of David Bick, a director of Financial Dynamics and part of the Regan advisory team on the Co-op bid, appears as a witness on the payment slip together with that of Mr Regan himself. At the time of the payment in January 1995 Mr Bick was a director of Buchanan Communications, the advisers to Hobson, Mr Regan's food manufacturing company.

The £2.4m payment was made to Ronald Zimet, a mysterious businessman, in return for assistance in negotiating an



Key issue: David Bick (left) witnessed the payment by Andrew Regan (centre). Hobson's David Wigglesworth (right) expressed concerns about the deal. Bick photograph: PR Week

extension of a contract between Hobson and the Co-operative Wholesale Society.

Mr Bick said his involvement was perfectly in order: "I was a witness signatory to the extension

to the supply agreement." However, he denied he had in any way authorised it. "How can I when I am not a cheque signatory."

The payment is becoming a key issue on the Co-op bid as

the CWS says its representatives say they know nothing of Mr Zimet or his company Trellis International. They say all negotiations were conducted directly with Mr Regan.

Mr Zimet, who is thought to be in Israel, has been instructed by his lawyers not to comment.

News of the unusual authorisation came as fresh details of the payment to Mr Zimet emerged. It is understood that the non-executive directors of Hobson expressed concern about the offshore deal. The two non-executives on the board were David Wigglesworth, the non-executive chairman, and Martin Bunting, chairman of Bluebird Toys and former chairman of Lloyds Bank.

Hobson's auditors, KPMG, have already admitted that they had expressed concerns about the payment. KPMG said it only agreed to sign off Hobson's 1995 accounts following assurances from Mr Regan and fellow director, David Lyons, that the

Zimet payment was in order. Hobson's financial advisers, Swiss Bank Corporation, said it did not "clear" the payment to Trellis. It said it was told of the extension to the supply agreement with the Co-op in January 1995 but not the £2.4m payment. When it was told two months later it resigned as Hobson's financial adviser.

Mr Zimet is said to have approached Mr Regan in early 1995 saying he could re-negotiate the deal for £5m. He said that if he arranged it for less he would keep the difference. The deal was completed for £2.85m.

The CWS recently wrote to Mr Regan asking for details on Mr Zimet's role and why it was worth £2.4m. Mr Regan replied saying that Mr Zimet had been involved in the negotiations "for

some weeks". He was employed "because Hobson had not succeeded in negotiating an extension [to the supply contract] without assistance". It felt it could therefore "usefully use Mr Zimet".

Mr Melmoth wrote back pouring scorn on this explanation, saying that Mr Zimet had spent just three days on the negotiations and had been paid £2.4m for his trouble.

Mr Melmoth sent a second letter to Mr Regan yesterday saying: "I find it extraordinary that you did not appear to ask Mr Zimet how he was able to overcome the CWS resistance to your proposed terms. Were you not curious? Didn't you ask him what effective new strategy or tactic or argument he had employed in order to obtain the CWS agreement?"

Molins reveals hole in accounts

Jim Levi

The chartered accountants KPMG are at the centre of a second auditing nightmare - this time at Molins, the tobacco machinery company. Michael Orr, chairman of Molins, stunned shareholders at yesterday's annual meeting with revelations of a potential multi-million pound hole in its accounts after identifying "certain financial irregularities" at Langston Corporation, its US corrugated board machinery subsidiary.

Mr Orr told the meeting: "Preliminary indications suggest that the cumulative overstatement of profits could be in the region of \$12m (£7.4m)."

He said that after tax relief the figure could be reduced to

\$7.2m. Of this about \$1.8m appeared to relate to the 1996 accounts. This compared with the corrugated board division's operating profits last year of £3.7m and overall Molins group pre-tax profits of £24.9m.

Two senior American executives, Leo Maynes, president, and Walt Belleville, chief financial officer, have been sacked. Mr Orr has sent in two replacements from the UK - Tony Stroud, group international director of sales, as Langston's new general manager, and Bart Van Emdon as finance director.

Molins has also called in Price Waterhouse to work with KPMG on an immediate investigation. Asked by a shareholder if he thought KPMG were "blame-

worthy", Mr Orr said: "The very fact that we have asked Price Waterhouse to work alongside KPMG speaks for itself. We as directors of the company must take the blame. Perhaps the auditors share in that."

KPMG is already at the centre of a row at National Westminster over the £90m bank lost in its interest rate options department. An investigation into the NatWest affair by Cooper & Lybrand, chartered accountants, and Linklaters & Paines, the law firm, will examine the role of auditors KPMG.

The US losses at Molins sent the shares 97.5p lower to 645p, wiping £35m off the company's stock market value. They have fallen nearly 400p from last year's peak.

Problems at Langston first surfaced 10 days after release of annual accounts in the middle of last month.

"We were alerted by a phone call from a former employee of Langston who had recently resigned from the company," Mr Orr revealed. "At first the problem appeared to be a small one and in any case the allegations were unproven."

But by the end of March both Mr Maynes, who had been running the US operation since 1987, and his finance director, Mr Belleville, were suspended.

Mr Orr insisted that there was no suggestion of cash being taken out of the business but said overstating profits would have affected staff bonuses.

Berkeley fined £70,000 over pensions mis-selling review

Nic Cicutti
Personal Finance Editor

The Personal Investment Authority, the financial regulator, signalled yesterday that it had lost patience over the slow pace of its pensions mis-selling review by fining one of its members more than £70,000 for a series of compliance failures.

Berkeley Independent Advisers was also ordered to pay £15,000 in costs after admitting the offences. The fine against Berkeley, a network of independent financial advisers (IFAs), is the largest to be levied by the PIA against its members.

It signals a new-found toughness by the PIA against its

members following criticisms by MPs and consumer groups over its alleged failures to ensure swift compensation to victims of the pension transfer scandal.

A PIA spokesman said the fine followed a visit to the firm, based in Coventry, by the regulator's pensions review team in May 1996. The team found that Berkeley had failed to issue firms in its network with adequate instructions on how to identify pension cases that needed to be reviewed. It also failed to have proper procedures in place to monitor its advisers' conduct of the pensions review.

Hazel Hodge, head of marketing at Berkeley, said: "We have held our hands up and im-

mediately rectified those areas in which we were at fault."

When the PIA was formed in 1994, independent financial advisers feared they might not be equipped to deal with tougher compliance requirements.

Thousands rushed to join IFA networks which provide technical assistance and deal with compliance issues.

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100		Dow Jones		Nikkei		Hang Seng		Hong Kong	
4387.70	+41.80	10000	+100	17000	+100	12000	+100	12000	+100
4387.70	+41.80	10000	+100	17000	+100	12000	+100	12000	+100
4387.70	+41.80	10000	+100	17000	+100	12000	+100	12000	+100
4387.70	+41.80	10000	+100	17000	+100	12000	+100	12000	+100
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4387.70	+41.80	10000	+100	17000	+100	12000	+100	12000	+100
4387.70	+41.80	10000	+100	17000	+100	12000	+100	12000	+100
4387.70	+41.80	10000	+100	17000	+100	12000	+100	12000	+100

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling		UK medium gilt		US long bond		Euro area		Japan	
5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50

CURRENCIES									
£/\$		£/DM		£/¥		£/A\$		£/HK\$	
1.6368	+0.020	1.5144	0.6109	-0.08	0.0003	165.4	+2.56	150.9	15 May
1.6368	+0.020	1.5144	0.6109	-0.08	0.0003	165.4	+2.56	150.9	15 May
1.6368	+0.020	1.5144	0.6109	-0.08	0.0003	165.4	+2.56	150.9	15 May
1.6368	+0.020	1.5144	0.6109	-0.08	0.0003	165.4	+2.56	150.9	15 May
1.6368	+0.020	1.5144	0.6109	-0.08	0.0003	165.4	+2.56	150.9	15 May
1.6368	+0.020	1.5144	0.6109	-0.08	0.0003	165.4	+2.56	150.9	15 May
1.6368	+0.020	1.5144	0.6109	-0.08	0.0003	165.4	+2.56	150.9	15 May
1.6368	+0.020	1.5144	0.6109	-0.08	0.0003	165.4	+2.56	150.9	15 May
1.6368	+0.020	1.5144	0.6109	-0.08	0.0003	165.4	+2.56	150.9	15 May
1.6368	+0.020	1.5144	0.6109	-0.08	0.0003	165.4	+2.56	150.9	15 May

Supplementary Prospectus in connection with the
Offer for Subscription of up to 8,000,000 Ordinary Shares
in the capital of the Company

Sponsored by
Granville & Co.

Share capital following the Offer and assuming that it is fully subscribed

Authorized		Issued, and maximum number to be issued, fully paid	
Nominal Value	Number	Nominal Value	Number
£1,499,999.80	14,999,998	£800,000	8,000,000
Ordinary Shares of 10p each		Preference Shares of 10p each	
20p	2	20p	2

The Company is a Venture Capital Trust, as defined in section 842A(4) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988. The Company has made an investment under the public status of the Prospectus. Details of this investment are contained in the Supplementary Prospectus.

Applications may only be made on the Application Form contained in the Supplementary Prospectus. Copies of the Prospectus and the Supplementary Prospectus are available, during normal business hours on any weekday (Saturdays and public holidays excepted), from the Company, Antennae Office, London EC2N 1HP, by collection only up to and including 24 April 1997, and during normal business hours, and up to and including 15 May 1997 from:

Nelson Cobbold Ltd	PENNINE AIM VCT II plc	Granville & Co	Edgar & Linton
Martins Building	Martins Building	Martins Building	Martins Building
4 Water Street	4 Water Street	4 Water Street	4 Water Street
Liverpool L2 3UF	Liverpool L2 3UF	Liverpool L2 3UF	Liverpool L2 3UF

الاصح

market report / shares

Data Bank	
FTSE 100	4387.7 +41.6
FTSE 250	4528.4 +15.4
FTSE 350	2152.7 +17.7
SEAO 100	678.1 +1.2
SEAO 250	333.7 +1.3
SEAO 350	166.8 +1.4
Share spotlight	
Alcoholics	1.25
Banks	1.25
Chemicals	1.25
Electronics	1.25
Food	1.25
Healthcare	1.25
Insurance	1.25
Media	1.25
Oil	1.25
Property	1.25
Telecom	1.25
Utilities	1.25
Wine	1.25

Shares elect to continue longest bull run in four years

Taking Stock

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

Equities have enjoyed their longest bull run for more than four years. Blissfully ignoring the gunfire of the election and happy to draw inspiration from a robust Wall Street display, Footsie has moved ahead for seven consecutive trading days reaching 4,387.7 points with a 41.6 gain.

The unexpectedly strong display has lifted the index to its highest since blue chips took flight last month when John Major announced the dash to the polls.

In the main the election has been a crushing bore for the stock market although the sudden narrowing of Labour's lead in one of the opinion polls may have produced a little enthusiasm among private clients.

New York has been the real spur. The overnight performance by the Dow Jones Average, its second-biggest gain, put shares in a cheerfully

receptive mood when trading started and they made further progress despite a mixed New York opening.

Alliance & Leicester remained the most heavily traded share as the final Cazenove auction produced an overall average price of 533.7p for the members who elected to sell through the Alliance system.

The price, at one time was 559p, it closed at 549p, a 12p gain. BZW issued an Alliance covered warrant giving the right to buy at 557p in October next year. The warrant costs 82.75p.

Centrica, the distribution arm of the old British Gas, was actively traded, attracting a recorded 47 million turnover with one 10 million-deal going through; the price held at 58.25p.

Imperial Chemical Industries, first-quarter figure to be put on 16p to 720.5p with SBC Warburg, according to sources, buying 800,000 shares. The results will not be exciting, probably around 4.75m against 220m. There are hopes of better things to come and some even ponder the possibility of ICI pulling something spectacular out of the hat, such as an intriguing acquisition.

EMI, up 17.5p to 1,220p, was given another whirl on take-over speculation and on the financial pitch Schroders and Mercury Asset Management moved ahead on the sudden realisation they may have been overlooked in the recent financial surge.

Beas made a modest headway, put on 16p to 720.5p with SBC Warburg, according to sources, buying 800,000 shares. The results will not be exciting, probably around 4.75m against 220m. There are hopes of better things to come and some even ponder the possibility of ICI pulling something spectacular out of the hat, such as an intriguing acquisition.

on forecasts of lower profits. Waverley Mining crashed 15p to 39.5p as it put its once highly regarded Montonhall coal mine in Scotland into liquidation.

Reckitt & Colman, the household goods group, continued to advance, up 9p to 832.5p, on talk of a US strike. Somerfield, the supermarket chain held at 189p, with Moseferson hanging a 20p target on the shares, and Carpetright had that threshold lock, off 42.5p to 480p, with talk ABN Amro Hoare Govett had turned negative.

GB Rail, one of the privatised rail companies, steamed ahead 13p to 171.5p on suggestions the group is trading above expectations and results could be better than expected. One stockbroker apparently claimed the shares were 100p under-valued.

297p as ex-Burnfield men Brian McGowan and Clive Snowden moved in following a £9.2m placing to buy a distributor of glass fibre and polyester resin.

Arthur Shaw, the troubled hardware business, rose 0.75p to 4.75p; Ashley Levett, the Monaco-based commodities trader who controls Richmond Rugby Club has emerged as a 12 per cent shareholder.

AND International, paying £1m for a map business, gained 5p to 312.5p. Forminster, the Kookai clothing group, rose 40p to 125.5p following results.

Securities house Henderson Crosthwaite is taking analysts and fund managers to Israel next month to see the plastic moulding operations of Technoplast, regarded as an industry leader. Since coming to market at 125p earlier this year the shares have drifted to 91.5p. Henderson is looking for profits of £2.4m this year, putting the shares on a prospective pie of 8.2.

Shares of the 600 Group, the machine tool group, are a recovery buy, believes Henry Cooke Lumsden. The stockbroker has a target of 160p against 135p yesterday. Profits this year is expected to be £11.1m, improving to £11.8m and then £13.9m. The shares have fallen from 300p last year. In January the company warned it was experiencing weak markets in the UK.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: Ex rights: Ex dividend: Ex all: U.S. dollar: Source: FT Information

The Independent Index	
FTSE 100 - Real-time	4387.7
UK Stock Market Report	01
UK Company News	02
Foreign Exchange	03
Starting Rates	04
Water Shares	05
Electricity Shares	06
High Street Banks	07
Private Finance	08
Water Shares	09
Electricity Shares	10
High Street Banks	11
Private Finance	12

Market leaders: Top 20 volumes	
Stock	Volume
Alcoholics	400000
Bank	200000
Chemicals	100000
Electronics	80000
Food	70000
Healthcare	60000
Insurance	50000
Media	40000
Oil	30000
Property	20000
Telecom	10000
Utilities	8000
Wine	7000
Other	6000
FTSE 100 index hour by hour	
Open 4301.5 up 45.4	11.00 4385.1 up 38.0
High 4387.7 up 41.6	12.00 4385.1 up 42.0
Low 4378.5 up 32.5	13.00 4385.1 up 42.0
Close 4387.7 up 41.6	

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Institute of Directors' Convention told why business leaders should be treated like pop stars

John Lewis boss defends fat cats

ID Britain's fat cats found themselves an unlikely ally yesterday in Stuart Hampson, chairman of John Lewis, the department store chain that eschews conventional capitalism in favour of employee involvement, profit-sharing and social responsibility.

Mr Hampson told the Institute of Directors annual convention at the Albert Hall that business leaders should not feel "management guilt" about maintaining proper pay differentials between the boardroom and the shop floor.

"I don't see the real problem

as 'fat cats'. What's wrong is that there are too many 'thin cats' in business who deserve to be fatened up," he said. "As directors of companies we should have no problem in proclaiming loud and clear that business needs to reward talent and achievement. Wherever we look the most talented players are going to be sought after."

"No one cries 'scandal' about the transfer market between football clubs, about the huge sums paid to top sportsmen, about the fabulous fees commanded by the Three Tenors. Business is bound to operate along similar lines to secure a key player."

Mr Hampson, who earned

£343,499 last year, said however that it could not be right that in most businesses, incentives and rewards were focused disproportionately on senior management at the expense of other staff who deserved to feel valued and motivated. "I firmly believe we need to find a greater sense of fairness in the relationship between rewards at the top and those throughout the business as a whole. If more than a few were having their contributions to success recognised and being fattened up we'd be demonstrating that wealth creation benefits all those who create wealth and not just the few who hold the wealth. That's a step towards making industry re-

cover its respect in society."

John Lewis has 36,000 employees—all of whom are called partners and own the business with shares held on their behalf through a trust.

Each year every employee from the chairman down to the lowest paid storeman receives the same percentage of their salary as a partnership bonus. Last year a total of £82m was handed out, equivalent to 20 per cent of pay.

"I can tell you, if you want to show your workforce how well the business has performed over the past year, a 10-week bonus is a pretty clear message."

In his book, said Mr Hampson, if you wanted to satisfy the

customer you had to start by putting the employee first. "If you think of employees as a resource to be utilised as required, to be discarded when times get hard, to be down-sized or re-engineered, then don't be surprised if they behave like it."

Mr Hampson went on to warn that respect for business and business leaders had taken a major knock as a result of the fat cats debate. "Let's face it. The Greenbury Report hasn't put the matter to bed. It's just led to repackaging. The £1m-a-year-club continues to recruit new members as long-term incentive plans trip in."

Michael Harrison

McGowan and Snowdon move into manufacturing

Fresh from selling Burnfield, the hi-tech engineering group, to Fairley at the turn of the year, Brian McGowan and Clive Snowdon, have bought into a small manufacturing and distribution company, Umeco.

Mr McGowan walked away from Williams Holdings, the group he founded with Nigel Rudd, to go his own way with Burnfield five years ago. Mr McGowan recruited Mr Snowdon as finance director at Burnfield and then promoted him to managing director, while he was chairman. The partnership worked well at Burnfield. When they took over its market cap was £13m and by the time they sold out at Christmas it was worth £64m.

Mr McGowan's recent history at House of Fraser, where he is also chairman, has been less happy. He was brought in three years ago very much as the "golden boy" to float the company, but its share price today still lags some way behind its issue price. Last week Mr McGowan promised shareholders that if there was another cock-up at House of Fraser, he would fall on his sword.

No doubt this will be of comfort to shareholders in Umeco, whose biggest business is making aircraft refuelling systems. Messrs McGowan and Snowdon have reversed into the company by buying 5 per cent of the enlarged equity, following Umeco's acquisition of another company, Wellmar, and a £9.2m placing and offer.

Mr Snowdon tells me Umeco's profits are growing by around 30 per cent a year and they're looking to increase export earnings. They're also looking for a new head office, preferably somewhere near Stratford-upon-Avon, where Mr Snowdon lives.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



Change of direction: Brian McGowan left Williams Holdings to go his own way

money in ailing but salvageable brand names. Now he has broken the pattern with the announcement of an alliance between himself and the theme-restaurant giant Planet Hollywood. Planet Hollywood is not in trouble—yesterday it announced that first-quarter profits had tripled to \$101.6m—but Prince Al-Waleed is jumping aboard anyway. He has bought 1 per cent of the company's outstanding stock and has paid for the right to manage 34 Planet Hollywood restaurants in 23 countries in Europe and the Middle East.

British Invisibles is launching its latest global campaign to trumpet the achievements of the City, using the Royal Navy.

BI's chairman, Brian Pearce, has adopted this 20th-century version of gunboat diplomacy because the Royal Yacht Britannia, which BI has used for the past 10 years or so, is retiring. BI has agreed with the Royal Navy to "use aircraft carriers and other naval vessels as a temporary substitute".

Roy Leighton, chairman of BI's export promotion forum, says the Navy is keen on the idea. The modern ships are designed for winning and dining foreign decision makers, since most of the frigates and destroyers have helicopter hangers at the back (sorry, stern). So the heirs of Nelson have proved Napoleon wrong; we're a nation of financiers rather than shopkeepers after all.

John Willcock

BA counts cost of IRA hoax

Boh Ayling, chief executive of British Airways, yesterday told of the huge cost of Monday's IRA bomb hoax which closed Gatwick airport for most of the day, causing misery to thousands of passengers, writes Michael Harrison.

BA was forced to cancel more than 100 services, leaving 30,000 passengers marooned as it put its crisis management plan into operation.

Only two pilots and 20 cabin crew were able to handle their way through the traffic chaos to report for duty and by early afternoon 51 services had already been cancelled.

With chaos reigning in the terminals and BA flights around the world instructed to remain on the tarmac, the airline began booking up hotel rooms across south-east England for stranded priority passengers.

A total of 14 aircraft were in the air at the time of the alert and were diverted as far afield as Bournemouth, Southampton and Cardiff.



Opening salvo: Lord Young at the podium as Tim Melville-Ross looms large on a screen Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Labour plans under attack

Michael Harrison

The leadership of the Institute of Directors yesterday pledged that its annual convention would be an "election-free zone" but then proceeded to attack both the Labour Party and to a lesser extent, the Tories.

Lord Young, the IoD president, opened proceedings at the Albert Hall by saying that the business community would live with whichever party was in power on 2 May adding "and may the Lord have mercy on all our souls".

He refused to be drawn into openly criticising Labour but said that an increase in corporate taxation had to be on the agenda if it came to power.

Tim Melville-Ross, the institute's director general was less inhibited, attacking key elements of Labour's manifesto and warning of the uncertain future Britain would face under Labour. "There is so much uncertainty about what a new Labour government would do that really it has to be resolved

as soon as possible. Are they for privatisation or against? Are they for a single currency or against?"

He also criticised Labour on its support for the social chapter and the windfall tax which he described as "retrospective, perverse, and introduced for the wrong reasons".

However, Mr Melville-Ross also took the Conservatives to task, saying that a re-elected Tory government would be "a long way short of perfect".

He said there were real concerns about the way the Tories had managed the economy and the size of the borrowing requirement, nor did the IoD support Tory proposals for further industrial relations legislation to give the public the right to sue unions which held strikes in essential services.

Mr Melville-Ross said that, whichever party won power, interest rates were likely to go up to take the heat out of the economy. There was also likely to be a tightening of fiscal policy to keep a lid on consumer spending.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
UK	162.33	8.6	24.21	1000	20.28	82.80	0.3840
Canada	2.023	61.66	170.132	1000	20.28	82.80	0.3840
France	2.779	70.73	207.386	1724	33.31	99.96	10000
Germany	8.794	235.21	675.844	57.760	100.04	322.312	33.762
Italy	2.784	59.42	171.94	265.335	73.633	894.568	894.568
Japan	204.72	99.46	286.280	126.11	54.53	17.565	74.641
EDU	14.266	24.20	72.68	103.73	11.12	36.38	0.032
Belgium	37.083	5.10	42.35	38.337	7.5	20.17	20.0358
Denmark	10.590	230.90	770.800	632.36	99.79	238.247	340.96
Netherlands	33.288	59.77	246.232	102.95	39.37	121.75	1.289
Ireland	10.487	6.1	17.948	14.88	5.4	10.9	0.3772
Norway	114.35	280.20	790.470	70.442	50.25	16.89	41.36
Spain	234.45	128.13	410.01	84.443	69.83	170.250	84.507
Sweden	2.388	123.80	640.530	78.30	41.6	143.658	92.101
Switzerland	2.572	63.84	274.250	146.3	49.46	145.38	0.8334
Australia	2.0883	4.4	14.4	1.371	6.8	14.76	0.736
Hong Kong	8.577	67.26	194.123	72.77	4.585	17.3	0.049
Malaysia	4.0542	0.0	0.0	2.4975	27.30	80.89	0.049
New Zealand	2.688	25.53	74.96	14.25	65.67	0.049	0.049
Saudi Arabia	6.888	0.0	0.0	3.733	1.4	0.0	0.0
Singapore	2.3418	0.0	0.0	14.443	24.19	70.55	0.8336

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
Argentina	162.33	8.6	24.21	1000	20.28	82.80	0.3840
Australia	162.33	8.6	24.21	1000	20.28	82.80	0.3840
Canada	2.023	61.66	170.132	1000	20.28	82.80	0.3840
France	2.779	70.73	207.386	1724	33.31	99.96	10000
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Netherlands	33.288	59.77	246.232	102.95	39.37	121.75	1.289
Ireland	10.487	6.1	17.948	14.88	5.4	10.9	0.3772
Norway	114.35	280.20	790.470	70.442	50.25	16.89	41.36
Spain	234.45	128.13	410.01	84.443	69.83	170.250	84.507
Sweden	2.388	123.80	640.530	78.30	41.6	143.658	92.101
Switzerland	2.572	63.84	274.250	146.3	49.46	145.38	0.8334
Australia	2.0883	4.4	14.4	1.371	6.8	14.76	0.736
Hong Kong	8.577	67.26	194.123	72.77	4.585	17.3	0.049
Malaysia	4.0542	0.0	0.0	2.4975	27.30	80.89	0.049
New Zealand	2.688	25.53	74.96	14.25	65.67	0.049	0.049
Saudi Arabia	6.888	0.0	0.0	3.733	1.4	0.0	0.0
Singapore	2.3418	0.0	0.0	14.443	24.19	70.55	0.8336

Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.00%	Germany	2.50%	US	8.75%	Japan	0.50%
France	3.50%	Canada	4.50%	Spain	4.00%	Belgium	2.50%
Italy	7.50%	Denmark	4.75%	Sweden	3.00%	Switzerland	3.00%
Netherlands	2.25%	Sweden	5.00%	Switzerland	1.00%	Denmark	4.00%
Belgium	2.25%	Denmark	4.00%	Switzerland	1.00%	Belgium	2.50%

Bond Yields

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	7.0%	Germany	2.5%	US	8.75%	Japan	0.5%
France	3.5%	Canada	4.5%	Spain	4.0%	Belgium	2.5%
Italy	7.5%	Denmark	4.75%	Sweden	3.0%	Switzerland	3.0%
Netherlands	2.25%	Sweden	5.0%	Switzerland	1.0%	Denmark	4.0%
Belgium	2.25%	Denmark	4.0%	Switzerland	1.0%	Belgium	2.5%

Money Market Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.00%	Germany	2.50%	US	8.75%	Japan	0.50%
France	3.50%	Canada	4.50%	Spain	4.00%	Belgium	2.50%
Italy	7.50%	Denmark	4.75%	Sweden	3.00%	Switzerland	3.00%
Netherlands	2.25%	Sweden	5.00%	Switzerland	1.00%	Denmark	4.00%
Belgium	2.25%	Denmark	4.00%	Switzerland	1.00%	Belgium	2.50%

Tourist Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.00%	Germany	2.50%	US	8.75%	Japan	0.50%
France	3.50%	Canada	4.50%	Spain	4.00%	Belgium	2.50%
Italy	7.50%	Denmark	4.75%	Sweden	3.00%	Switzerland	3.00%
Netherlands	2.25%	Sweden	5.00%	Switzerland	1.00%	Denmark	4.00%
Belgium	2.25%	Denmark	4.00%	Switzerland	1.00%	Belgium	2.50%

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for day	End/Cons traded	Open Interest
Long Gold	100.00	100.00	100.00	170115
Short Gold	100.00	100.00	100.00	170115
Long Oil	100.00	100.00	100.00	100000
Short Oil	100.00	100.00	100.00	100000
Long Silver	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Silver	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Copper	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Copper	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Aluminum	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Aluminum	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Zinc	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Zinc	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Lead	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Lead	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Nickel	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Nickel	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Platinum	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Platinum	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Palladium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Palladium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Rhodium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Rhodium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Iridium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Iridium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Osmium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
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Long Ruthenium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
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Long Rhenium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Rhenium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Technetium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Technetium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Promethium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Promethium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Samarium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Samarium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Europium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Europium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Gadolinium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Gadolinium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Terbium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
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Long Dysprosium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
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Short Erbium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Thulium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
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Long Tantalum	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Short Tantalum	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
Long Niobium	100.00	100.00	100.00	114621
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sport

All-rounder who charmed a generation



Denis Compton: Handsome, debonair and a sporting hero with nerves of brass Photograph: Allsport/Hulton Getty

Shortly before Arsenal met Liverpool in the 1971 FA Cup final I was made responsible for bringing together members of the team that defeated Liverpool at Wembley two decades earlier.

At a lunch put on by the *Daily Mirror*, a photograph was taken of them to be published alongside one as they once were. Of course, life after Arsenal had been kinder to some than others. Joe Mercer, Freddie Cox and George Swindin had gone into football management but the team's brilliant Scottish schemer, Jimmy Logie, was selling newspapers outside a department store in London. Nobody needed to ask Denis Compton how things were shaping up. Still handsome and debonair, he was seen frequently on television and had a newspaper column.

However, you look at fame, Compton, who died yesterday at 78, is famous not merely for his prowess at cricket and football. Even people who never miss an opportunity to boast that they are utterly unimpressed about sport, and deem an



Ken Jones reflects on the late Denis Compton, perhaps the most exciting batsman of all time, a man whose debonair image and cavalier approach to sport and life captivated an era

interest in games evidence of arrested development, associate Compton with stardom. The connection thrives in their subconscious and is, therefore, a measure of true fame.

The proof is in the records and the memories of the men who played with, and against, Compton, especially during the long hot summer of 1947 when he amassed 3,816 runs, scoring a record 18 centuries that included six against the touring South Africans.

However, it was not merely that Compton was a great batsman and, in the view of many qualified judges, the most exciting of any time. It was not just that he had nerves of brass and a constitution that did not appear to require much sleep or bicarbonate of soda. Rather it was that — as John Lardner wrote of Walter Hagen — he was "one who succeeded as few

members of our meekly desperate species have done, in adjusting the shape, speed and social laws of the world to his own tastes."

Unless it was Compton's friend, the great Australian all-rounder Keith Miller, nobody seemed to get more fun out of sport. Now he has gone, following from that Arsenal team of 1950, Wally Barnes, brother Leslie, Mercer, Logie, and, recently, Reg Lewis.

You may think this pedantic and in the circumstances a little ungracious, but because Compton's 14 appearances for England at football were made in unofficial wartime matches it is not entirely accurate to describe him as a dual international.

In an autobiography published 47 years ago, Arsenal's famed outside-left, Cliff Bastin, wrote: "Denis is one of the greatest all-round sportsmen England has ever known...but as a footballer, I find it rather difficult to form an opinion of Denis, for war-time football provided no proper test. He has a fine left foot, and clever ball control, and perhaps if he had devoted more time to football, since the war, he would have been able to achieve his ambition of adding a full cap to those he won during hostilities. As it is, Denis, quite unspoiled for all his brilliant success, is undoubtedly a better cricketer than he is a footballer."

Compton's cricketing prowess and good looks led to a breakthrough in sports marketing when an astute accountant, Bagel Harvey, signed him to an advertising contract with the makers of Brylcreem. Others soon followed: the Fulham and England inside-forward, Johnny Haynes, and a

dual international, Arthur Milton of Arsenal and Gloucestershire, but Compton's is the face that most people of my generation remember.

Apart from great natural ability, what Compton had above all else was an appealing personality. He took sport seriously enough but like Miller, who had some hairy experiences as a fighter pilot, he did not think it to be a life-or-death matter.

Little about Compton, in his marvellous batting or his life, suggested much in the way of conformity, but unlike many of today's heroes he did not embarrass himself or the establishment. An important thing was that people would queue for hours to watch him play. I know this to be true because I was one of them. You could not hope to emulate Compton but his improvisation was thrilling.

When barely 17 years old I played against Compton in a Football Combination match at Highbury. I called him "Mister". He knocked me over when going for the ball, and at the time I could not think of anything better.

'A legend with a film star status'

ADAM SZRETER

There were tributes from the worlds of cricket and football following the death yesterday of Denis Compton.

The former England captain Red Dexter said: "I'm very sad to hear this. Denis was an inspiration to me. I saw him at Lord's as a schoolboy and got his autograph while he was fielding on the boundary. He was a definite genius with the bat. He adorned the game and we should mourn his passing."

Another former England captain Brian Close, who played against Compton just after the war, said: "In those years there were two great players for England. There was Denis and there was Sir Len Hutton. The great thing about Denis was that he enjoyed life to the full. He was a great, natural ball player and never took things too seriously."

The umpire Dickie Bird said: "I shall miss him, everyone will miss him. Not only was he a great player but he was also a friend, a true friend of mine. He's done a tremendous amount for English cricket, he was always on hand to help young cricketers. He was a tremendous ambassador for the game."

A more recent England captain Chris Cowdrey, Colin Cowdrey's son, said: "My mother and father were close friends of his and this will sadden them. But he had not been very well and no one would have wanted him to suffer. He was one of the truly great personalities of sport, let alone of cricket. He conveyed a sense of fun and he lived life."

Compton, of course, also played football for Arsenal and England and a spokeswoman for Arsenal said: "The club would like to pay tribute to the great Denis Compton. He was a talented all-round sportsman and our thoughts are with his family and friends."

Sir Stanley Matthews said: "He was a great footballer. I played with him many times in wartime internationals for England. I remember a particular game against Scotland when we won by several goals to one and Denis wore them apart down the left wing. I think Tommy Lawton scored three or four goals that day from Denis's passes."

The current Middlesex captain and England selector, Mike Gatting, said: "It is very sad. He was a legend at Middlesex. Everybody from the youngest on the staff to the oldest member has fond memories of him. Compton was friendly to me and always took an interest in my career. He was an amazing man."

The Middlesex coach and former player, Don Bennett, said: "He was a legend. We played Surrey in a three-day game in 1950 and 60,000 people came through the turnstiles, mainly to see him. He was the draw. He had film star status."

And the Prime Minister, John Major, said: "Those who ever saw Denis Compton but have an imperishable memory of the greatest cavalier of cricket."

TODAY'S NUMBER

500

The number of career singles victories recorded by tennis world No. 5 Michael Chang following his win over Jan-Michael Gambill in the Monte Carlo Open yesterday. He joins Boris Becker (who has 672), Thomas Muster and Pete Sampras in the 500 club.

Connor's lessons for Stephenson

DEREK PRINGLE

reports from Chelmsford Essex 246 Hampshire 103-7

It is three years since John Stephenson departed Chelmsford for greener pastures and the captaincy of Hampshire. Even so, he should still remember the perils inherent in being seduced into bowling first by an Essex green-top that claimed 17 wickets in the day. The first rule is you need some decent bowlers, a criterion only Cardiff Connor satisfied for the visitors with his wily 7 for 46. The second is that you don't want to bat until day two, a discovery Hampshire made when they ended day on 103 for 7, some 143 runs behind. Having won the toss Stephenson probably contemplated some kind of ascendancy. Instead having dismissed Essex for 246, his team were facing annihilation in three days.

With Robin Smith missing due to an Achilles tendon strain, Hampshire, despite the

addition of their Australian import Matthew Hayden, were always under-strength. It was a fact Essex's superior firepower with the ball soon exploited. Ashley Cowan, in particular, proved a real handful, taking the first three wickets, including the prized scalp of Hayden, caught off his glove as he tried to swivel onto a bouncer.

A tall man with a high action, the 21-year-old Cowan has the ability to generate good pace off a short run and he finished the day with figures of 4 for 35. He was well supported by Ronnie Irani, who did for Kevan James, bowling him playing back, as well as for Stephenson whose bat and pad caught was taken by Darren Robinson at short-leg.

But if Essex relied on team work, Hampshire were almost solely reliant on the 36-year-old Connor, currently enjoying a benefit year. To the envy of many, Connor has something of a reputation for being able to dismiss Graham Gooch, a distinction upheld when he had the great man, now in his 24th season with Essex, lbw.

But if that was the only they

wanted, Hampshire's spirits quickly flagged as Paul Prichard and Nasser Hussain went about the reconstruction, adding 97 for the second wicket, before Hussain had his off bail trimmed by a leg-cutter from Connor, who had by now changed to the River End.

With Prichard lbw on the stroke of lunch for a fluent 65, the stage was set for Stuart Law, left out of the Australian touring party, to reassert his impressive credentials. Adding a rapid 53 with Ronnie Irani, he looked untroubled until he was lbw, whipping across a straight ball from Dimitri Mascarenhas.

It left Irani contemplating the belligerent role he likes best and one, for Essex at least, in which he excels. Having pummeled a couple of scorers through the covers off the back foot, he was out one short of his half-century when he tamely skied a leading edge to James at cover.

That was Connor's fifth wicket and it was not long before he and Stephenson, having a heated bowl, polished off the tail, unaware of the ruin that lay ahead.



Nick Trainor and Tony Wright, Gloucestershire's openers, stride out at Grace Road yesterday Photograph: David Ashdown

Surrey seamers toil

HENRY BLOFIELD

reports from The Oval Somerset 311-5 v Surrey

In one sense, it was a sensational start to the season at The Oval. On the very first day, with more than a week of April to go, Surrey used two leg-spinners, Ian Salisbury and Nadeem Shahid, against some mostly determined Somerset batting.

In another, it was business much as usual, in a slow pitch which was full of runs. Surrey's seam attack which had a somewhat boring, dilatory sameness about it, had a good work-out against a side unwilling to waste the advantage of batting first.

The influence of Somerset's new coach, Dermot Reeve, was easy to see. If he can persuade his players to make the most of their abilities, Somerset will win more than five Championship matches this year.

For 30 overs, Mark Lathwell cut into those impetuous fourishes which he so often got him into trouble. Peter Bowler, their new captain, battled with sense and responsibility for nearly two

and three-quarter hours and Richard Harden and Piran Hollway also put their heads down. Surrey's four main seam bowlers, Martin Bicknell, Chris Lewis, Joey Benjamin, and Alex Tudor, all run in a long way and apart from Tudor in one spell before tea, did not look particularly threatening. They also bowled far too many no-balls contributing to the absurd total of 69 extras.

Four overs of Salisbury was the only variation from seam before lunch when he bowled Lathwell, who made the mistake of playing back to a top spinner. Salisbury had another 21 overs later in the day when the need for economy was least on his mind. As always he needs confidence to give the ball air and more of a tweak, when he will be a more dangerous bowler.

The game was left rather more in balance when, shortly before the end, Adam Hollis, the fifth seamer, had Hollway caught behind and Mike Burns lbw in successive overs.

Surrey have appointed their former player Keith Medley as assistant coach, replacing Tony Pigott who left this month.

Young impresses on debut

MIKE CAREY

reports from Leicester Gloucestershire 245 Leicestershire 99-3

They hoisted the Championship pennant in a pre-match ceremony here yesterday. Later, quite unscheduled and out of context with what had gone before, Shaun Young and Jack Russell unceremoniously hoisted Leicestershire's bowling to all parts in a manner that the champions will not want to see repeated too often this season.

It was the sort of thing, though, that can happen in the best of circles on the first day of the season and allowing for various indications of rustiness and the odd fielding lapses, Leicestershire probably felt that dismissing Gloucestershire for under 300 on a good pitch was not a bad day's work.

Alan Mullally probably thought so. When last sighted he was spraying the ball to all parts on England's behalf. Yesterday under the gaze of David Lloyd, but more likely because

he is again under the tutelage of Jack Birkenshaw, he bowled very straight, picked up five wickets and troubled the two left-handers, Russell and Young, more than anyone.

There was still not much evidence of any ability to bring the ball back into the right-handers but, until Mike Smith appeared in the evening, no one swung the ball much anyway. Mostly it moved off the seam, and then only under cloud cover. When the sun shone for lengthy periods, batting looked straightforward.

Thus Gloucestershire must have cursed the combination of early-season errors and inadequate forecast which plunged them to 84 for 5. That was their lowest point, not least when Mark Alleyne, their new captain, found himself in no-man's land and was left before without scoring to James Ormond.

Positive action was called for at this stage and Russell provided it, which probably eased any pressure that Young might have been feeling in his first Championship innings. Russell was soon busy dabbling and nudging as well as leaving extravagantly

alone. In their frustration, Leicestershire bowled too short and were robustly booked and pulled for their pains.

Young has played League cricket for Fleetwood and toured here with Young Australia two years ago. When Gloucestershire were seeking a replacement for Courtney Walsh, his pedigree was vouched for by a trio of knowledgeable cricketers in Terry Alderman, Brian Davison and Dave Gilbert, but one straight drive for four off the back foot would have been enough for many connoisseurs here.

On quicker pitches it is not difficult to imagine his forthright strokeplay causing a stir, even at Somerset's Bristol. Here both he and Russell were helped when Leicestershire, having obtained their early successes by bowling to a fullish length, degenerated to a foolish one on this pitch. Richards and Young helped themselves and added 112 in 29 overs.

Leicestershire have signed the Natal all-rounder Neil Johnson, who replaces the West Indian all-rounder Phil Simmons on a one-year contract.

Welsh on song

ROUND-UP

Warwickshire, the pre-season bookmakers' favourites to regain the Britannia Assurance County Championship, looked anything but a side set to reassert their superiority in the four-day game when the campaign began yesterday.

The 1995 champions were dismissed for just 151 by Glamorgan at Cardiff in their opening Championship innings of the summer, and then had no joy in the field as their opponents set about building a commanding lead.

Darren Thomas took 4 for 62 as the Welsh county showed that they can bowl sides out even before the arrival of their overseas players, Waqar Younis, from Pakistan. The off-spinner Robert Croft, who is likely to be on England duty for much of the season, took two wickets.

Glamorgan restricted Warwickshire to a best individual knock of 36 from Neil Smith, and then reached tea with their opening partnership of Steve James and Hugh Morris intact. James was eventually out for 83 but

Morris was unbeaten on 78 at the close with Glamorgan 195 for 1.

There were two centuries on the opening day of Championship play. Lancashire's Graham Lloyd was the top scorer — he was dismissed for 102 as Lancashire piled up a formidable tally of 494 for 9 at Old Trafford to turn David Boon's first day of serious action as captain of Durham into something of a nightmare. As well as Lloyd, Jason Gallian, Peter Martin, Glen Chapple and Mike Watkin all passed fifty.

Tim Curtis was unbeaten on 100 as Worcestershire made 286 for 3 against Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge. The 37-year-old Curtis, a former England opener, announced yesterday that he is to retire at the end of the season to take up a full-time teaching post at Worcester Royal Grammar School.

Devon Malcolm showed the form that once made him England's most-feared fast bowler, taking 6 for 74 as Kent were dismissed for 251 at Canterbury. However, Derbyshire were 35 for 4 at the close. At Hove, Northamptonshire scored 288 for 9 against Sussex.

Britannia Assurance County Championship

First day of play

Essex v Hampshire

Essex 246 Hampshire 103-7

Essex 1st Innings: 1-11, 2-11, 3-11, 4-11, 5-11, 6-11, 7-11, 8-11, 9-11, 10-11, 11-11, 12-11, 13-11, 14-11, 15-11, 16-11, 17-11, 18-11, 19-11, 20-11, 21-11, 22-11, 23-11, 24-11, 25-11, 26-11, 27-11, 28-11, 29-11, 30-11, 31-11, 32-11, 33-11, 34-11, 35-11, 36-11, 37-11, 38-11, 39-11, 40-11, 41-11, 42-11, 43-11, 44-11, 45-11, 46-11, 47-11, 48-11, 49-11, 50-11, 51-11, 52-11, 53-11, 54-11, 55-11, 56-11, 57-11, 58-11, 59-11, 60-11, 61-11, 62-11, 63-11, 64-11, 65-11, 66-11, 67-11, 68-11, 69-11, 70-11, 71-11, 72-11, 73-11, 74-11, 75-11, 76-11, 77-11, 78-11, 79-11, 80-11, 81-11, 82-11, 83-11, 84-11, 85-11, 86-11, 87-11, 88-11, 89-11, 90-11, 91-11, 92-11, 93-11, 94-11, 95-11, 96-11, 97-11, 98-11, 99-11, 100-11, 101-11, 102-11, 103-11, 104-11, 105-11, 106-11, 107-11, 108-11, 109-11, 110-11, 111-11, 112-11, 113-11, 114-11, 115-11, 116-11, 117-11, 118-11, 119-11, 120-11, 121-11, 122-11, 123-11, 124-11, 125-11, 126-11, 127-11, 128-11, 129-11, 130-11, 131-11, 132-11, 133-11, 134-11, 135-11, 136-11, 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637-11, 638-11, 639-11, 640-11, 641-11, 642-11, 643-11, 644-11, 645-11, 646-11

Liverpool aim to keep pride intact

Although the Graeme Souness era is less than fondly remembered at Anfield, a European night during his term as manager provides an inspiring precedent for Liverpool as they strive against overwhelming odds to reach the Cup-Winners' Cup final tonight.

With Roy Evans' side trailing 3-0 to Paris St-Germain after the first leg of the semi-final, history shows that even the Liverpool of Shankly, Paisley and Fagan never overturned such arrears in Continental competition. When David "Supersub" Fairclough completed an epic fightback against St Etienne en route to the Champions' Cup 20 years ago, the French lead had been only 1-0.

Yet in 1991, Auxerre, leading 2-0, came to Merseyside to complete formalities in the UEFA Cup and returned to France shell-shocked. Liverpool scored in four minutes and quickly levelled the aggregate score. Seven minutes from the end Mark Walters ensured that they made up a two-goal deficit for the first time ever.

That, as Evans will recall from his role as coach, was with a transitional team who were struggling against all manner of lower-division visitors. It was also in a half-empty stadium. Tonight, PSG face a vastly superior Liverpool line-up - one with something to prove now that the Premiership appears to have slipped away - and Anfield will be packed.

The strategy is sure to be similar: try to score early and see whether PSG can take the heat. The Liverpool manager has indicated that he will play Robbie Fowler, Stan Collymore and Patrick Berger together for the first time this season. Evans may also switch from a defensive trio plus wing-backs to a flat back four in the belief that the French might not relish a more "British" approach.

"It's a tall order but we must believe we can do it," Evans said

Phil Shaw on the Herculean task facing Roy Evans' team tonight

yesterday. "If we can get an early goal, we can get them on the run. If you don't believe you don't achieve."

"Normally you try to play a patient game in Europe, but we must set the tempo. The bottom line is that we've got to play fantastically and they'll have to be poor if we're to win."

Steve Harkness and Bjorn Tore Kvarme are respectively injured and ineligible, leaving Evans to choose replacements from Phil Babb, Neil Ruddock, Rob Jones and Dominic Matteo. Michael Thomas (knee) and Matteo (hip) face late fitness tests.

The error-ridden David James is set to retain his place - Liverpool have no plausible alternative keeper - knowing that whatever miracles are mustered at the opposite end, one slip could give PSG an away goal and almost certainly the tie.

For the Parisians, who have perhaps even greater expectations of the 21-year-old striker Jerome LeRoy than Anfield has of Fowler, left-back Didier Domi is the only casualty. Their Brazilian manager, Ricardo, anticipates a "much more aggressive" Liverpool than at Parc des Princes. If that proved the case, he added, it would merely create more space for his team to counter-attack.

In the other Cup-Winners' Cup semi-final tonight Fiorentina and Barcelona start at 1-1 in Italy. Fiorentina will be without the suspended Argentinian striker Gabriel Batistuta, who scored their equaliser in the first leg. For Barcelona the former Tottenham midfielder player George Popescu is suspended.

Le Saux's resolve

ALAN NIXON

Graeme Le Saux has refused to commit himself to Blackburn Rovers despite pressure from the club's owner, Jack Walker, to keep the England left-back at Ewood Park next season.

Le Saux made a surprise return to the Rovers side after being dropped and went on to score in Tuesday night's win over Sheffield Wednesday.

He was not prepared to rule out a move in the summer, however, saying: "All I want to do is make the most of my career in the time I've got available. I've not made my decision public yet, but everybody is aware of the problems. I don't want other things to affect my game."

He added: "It would be unprofessional to say anything until this matter is resolved with the club. You had better ask the people in charge about that."

Le Saux said that his "troubles" had affected his performance for the past few months when his club form has dipped. "This has been going on for a long time," he said. "It's a situation that had got the better of me. It's been serious enough to put me off my game. But I don't want a reputation as a problem player. I was trying to cope with all that was troubling me as best I could, but it wasn't working."

Walker is determined to keep Le Saux and certainly will not let him go cheaply. However, his decision to recall the Channel Islander has caused more friction with team-mate Jason Wilcox. The left-winger would not sit on the bench in midweek after being dropped and is poised to ask for a transfer.

Blackburn's troubles have been exacerbated by an injury to the striker Chris Sutton, who suffered a hamstring strain and was substituted at half-time during Tuesday's match.

The Nottingham Forest caretaker manager, Stuart Pearce, is to remain at the City Ground next season as a player even if the club are relegated. However, he is not prepared to say whether he will remain as manager, although he admits he has made a decision about his future.

"I will certainly be here as a player next season as I have a three-year contract to honour," Pearce said. "I have also made my mind up as regards whether I want to remain as a manager but I am not ready to reveal what my thoughts are."

Brighton's plans to play their home games at the new stadium in Hove next season could be put in jeopardy as the venue does not at present meet the League's criteria to stage matches.



Former world heavyweight champion George Foreman greases up for a work-out in training for Saturday's fight against Lou Savarese in Atlantic City

Photograph: AP

Old pals prepare for business in hand

Golf

ANDY FARRELL reports from Madrid

Once they had nothing more on their minds than trying to be the Tiger Woods of the day, now if they resemble a couple of 40-plus chief executives out for a day's golf, that is exactly what they are, although it helps to be Seve Ballesteros and Greg Norman when it comes to

teeing up in the Peugeot Spanish Open.

Ballesteros is the boss of the event's promoters, Arnie Corner, and asked Norman, head of the rapidly expanding Great White Shark Inc. to return to Madrid for the first time in 15 years as a special favour. The quid pro quo is that the Spaniard will play in Norman's Holden Classic in Australia during the winter.

"After 21 years of playing the

game together, it is right that we should help each other out," the Australian said. "It is like Jack [Nicklaus] inviting Arnie [Palmer] to the Memorial, and Arnie inviting Jack to his tournament at Bay Hill."

Norman was more concerned about attending his first bullfight last night than the fact that Tom Lehman had ended his record run of 96 weeks as the world No.1. "I've been up there a long time," Norman said. "The best

player right now is Tiger Woods. Like anything, golf needs young blood and new talent to come through. America was crying out for someone like Tiger. He has topped the level for everyone."

Woods is only ranked at No.5, while Norman can regain the top spot by finishing in the top ten here.

Like Norman, Ballesteros was long gone before Woods was crowned at Augusta and he has turned to the Australian's

old coach, and Woods's mentor, Butch Harmon, in the hope of making his first cut of the season. "If one doctor cannot help, you try another," Seve said. He has had more second opinions than he has played rounds recently.

As the European captain, Ryder Cup matters are also on Seve's mind. He knows who he wants as a No.2 but he cannot yet name him, saying only that the candidate can speak both

English and Spanish. Next week, he heads for Valderrama to help set up the course. "There will be fairway for 260 yards and then only rough," is his plan to combat Woods. He will not decide on whether to be a playing captain until he picks his two wild cards on 31 August, on which subject he repeated "there are no guarantees for anyone". For the record, Norman thinks America will win.

Davies and Thomas out of final line-ups

Rugby Union

Jonathan Davies and Arwel Thomas, who contested the Wales No.10 shirt this season, will both be missing from their clubs' starting line-ups in Saturday's Swales Cup final - the last match to be held at Cardiff Arms Park before it is demolished.

Davies, who is still recovering from a dead leg and has played little rugby during the last month, will be confined to the "replacement" bench as Cardiff opt for the 20-year-old Lee Jarvis at outside-half.

Thomas, who played his first game in two months for Swansea on Saturday, will make way for Aled Williams, after

feeling some reaction to a knee ligament injury.

Twickenham yesterday confirmed that clubs outside England's top two divisions will not lose money following the withdrawal of Courage's sponsorship of the entire league system. The Rugby Football Union has pledged to "at the minimum, match the levels of this season".

Tougher qualifications in line for trials

Equestrianism

GENEVIEVE MURPHY

Hugh Thomas, director of the Mitsubishi Badminton Horse Trials which run from 7 to 11 May, anticipates tougher qualifications for next year's event after receiving an unprecedented number of entries.

This year made the controversial decision to limit overseas countries to five horses, but, even so, still has 45 on the waiting list. There has since been resentment against Blyth Tait, New Zealand's Olympic champion, for his fairly mild assertion that spectators would rather see the top riders with two horses than "Samantha

Cipotty-Clop" with one. Three British riders - Karen Dixon, Leslie Law and Ian Stark - are due to ride two horses apiece. Both Andrew Nicholson of New Zealand and Bruce Davidson of the United States have two horses listed, but they will only ride their second horse if one of their countrymen drop out.

FOOTBALL RESULTS

Yesterday

FROM INSURANCE COMBINATION First Division: Arsenal 3, Ipswich 0; Bournemouth 0, Cardiff 0; Millwall 0, Luton 1; Wimbledon 1, Southampton 2.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY (Turk): Wales 2, England 0.

Tuesday

UEFA CUP Semi-final second leg: Arsenal 1, Tottenham 2; Liverpool 2, Bayern 1; Chelsea 1, Lazio 1; Juventus 1, Fiorentina 1; Lazio 1, Fiorentina 1.

FA CUP Semi-final replay: Chelsea 0, Millwall 2; Arsenal 1, Tottenham 2; Liverpool 2, Bayern 1; Chelsea 1, Lazio 1; Juventus 1, Fiorentina 1.

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DR MARTENS LEAGUE Premier Division: Arsenal 1, Southampton 0; Cambridge City 4, Ayrton 2; Tottenham 2, Ipswich 0; Bournemouth 0, Cardiff 0; Millwall 0, Luton 1; Wimbledon 1, Southampton 2.

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Here comes summer
The opening day of cricket's
County Championship, page 26

sport

Liverpool playing for pride
Phil Shaw previews the European
semi-final tonight at Anfield, page 27



Survival is the priority for Juninho

Football
SIMON MULLOCK

Juninho yesterday promised to unleash the full scope of his Brazilian brilliance in a bid to end Middlesbrough's 121-year wait for a trophy, but admitted that Premiership survival remains his top priority.

The 23-year-old midfielder understands the significance of Middlesbrough's passage into their first-ever FA Cup final and

is relishing the task of pitting his wits against Chelsea at Wembley next month.

But he also realises that a fleeting moment of glory pales into insignificance compared to the fight to stay in the top-flight and believes that the team Bryan Robson built for £26m will have to win three of their last five matches to remain in the big time.

Juninho, once again in brilliant form as Middlesbrough ended Chesterfield's dream

with a 3-0 semi-final win at Hillsborough on Tuesday, said: "The FA Cup is one of the most important competitions in the world and I know how much it means to English players. It was an excellent performance by us. We showed that when we get the ball down and pass from back to midfield to the forwards then we are a good team."

"It is great for the fans. They haven't been very happy because we lost to Leicester in the Coca-Cola Cup final and then to Sunderland. But for now we have to concentrate on the important matter of the League. I think we have to win two games from the four we have away from home and win our one home game as well to stay up."

The survival bid begins at Tottenham tonight, but there is no doubt that Juninho is delighted to be locking horns with the likes of Gianfranco Zola, Roberto Di Matteo and Franck Leboeuf when he returns to the capital on 17 May for the final.

"It is very good for Middlesbrough that we are through to the final and that we are playing Chelsea. The FA Cup final will be much better than the Coca-Cola Cup final I'm sure, because Chelsea play football. It should be open, but that's the English way. I just hope we can win it this time," Juninho said.

It is a view shared by the Danish striker Mikkil Beck, who opened the scoring against Chesterfield: "It's certainly true that Boro won something. I thought we were unfortunate not to have won the Coca-Cola Cup at Wembley but now we have a second chance and against a team that wants to play football."

Taylor warns on sportsmanship

Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, yesterday urged members to be mindful of their role in setting an example after Ruud Gullit joined Arsène Wenger in criticising players who break the game's unwritten code of gentlemanly conduct in England.

Taylor said: "I think it is a good time to remind all players to keep setting the best sporting standards no matter what is at stake."

Chelsea's manager, Gullit, took up Wenger's theme after Vinnie Jones, Wimbledon's captain, launched a long throw in the closing minutes of their 1-0 London derby defeat on Tuesday. In line with what has become common practice, Jones should have thrown the ball to Chelsea, who had kicked it off when their goalkeeper, Craig Forrest, needed treatment for an injury.

The incident happened three days after Chris Sutton, the Blackburn striker, forced Arsenal to concede a corner from which Rovers scored an injury-time equaliser at Highbury, ending Arsenal's hopes of the Premier League title and improving his own team's chance of escaping relegation. Arsenal players were furious with Sutton as the throw-in had been conceded so that Stephen Hughes could be treated for an injury.

Taylor said: "Although I've not seen either the Sutton or Jones incident yet these are clearly worrying instances. We've all done a lot of work getting the game a good name for sportsmanship in this country. We won the Fair Play award at Euro '96. English clubs are high in the table for good behaviour and we've earned an extra place in the Uefa Cup next season."



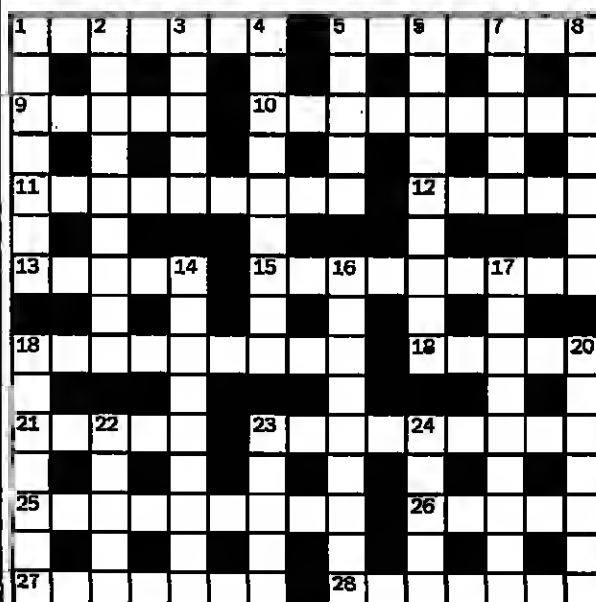
Michael Stich finds it tough going during his 6-3, 6-0 defeat by Richard Krajicek in the Monte Carlo Open yesterday. Photograph: Reuters

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 328 L, Thursday 24 April

By Spuris

Wednesday's solution



PRESTIGE
RIVER
OCEAN
LATE
FORTUNE
RECEIPT
A
TUBE
T
ODALISK
N
DEPARTMENTAL

ACROSS

- 1 Energy required by neon lighting in Georgian city is shown below (7)
- 5 Golf at Oxford - it involves a lot of driving (5-2)
- 9 Indication of agreement by Seychelles assembly (5)
- 10 Bridge partnership in row after hill's presented for drink (5-4)
- 11 A new trademark used in Australia is similar (9)
- 12 Herb's age we have been told (5)
- 13 Part of play audience will have watched? (5)
- 15 Sketch for which Association attracts silly rebuke (9)
- 18 Not having completed distance, talk of changing ultra-slow vehicle (4-3)
- 19 Date with oriental commander in public house (5)
- 21 Receipt covering £1, something kept as a souvenir (5)
- 23 Recycling centre where you've to use metre from now on? (9)
- 25 Extremely difficult woman's clean round the bend (9)
- 26 Attitude needed in business in the city (5)
- 27 Pasture fellow leased out, featured in advertising sheet (7)
- 28 Money used in old court, now obsolete (7)

DOWN

- 1 Kiss mostly greeting exam success - mark of 60 or 65? (3,4)
- 2 Small umber requiring plainer sort of type face (9)

- 3 Piece from Saudi orchestra, in sound only (5)
- 4 Political embarrassment associated with illegally obtained drug in Ohio (3,6)
- 5 Puzzle randomly encrypted by unusual symbols, primarily (5)
- 6 Surprisingly excellent book turned out to be indigestible (7)
- 7 Food processing plant outside capital's subject to ban on liquor (5)
- 8 Introduce new recipe for crepe produced by French (7)
- 14 Working to unscramble clue, initially formidable feat? (9)
- 16 NUT create upset, making pronunciation (9)
- 17 Intense sort of reverence a fellow must keep in proportion (9)
- 18 Harm's done, unfortunately, by a trainee lawman (7)
- 20 Great suspicion said to occasion retreat? (7)
- 22 Money ticket, one conveying a right to get some grub? (5)
- 23 Odour that is associated with hospital department (5)
- 24 Embroiderer's knot featured in picture books (5)

Compton the corinthian dies at 78

DEREK PRINGLE

Cricket Correspondent

In an era where cricketers are becoming more faceless by the season, the passing of Denis Compton at the age of 78, will be mourned by all those who believe sportsman should passionately embrace more than the sport itself. Compton may have been a fine footballer and an even better cricketer, but he embraced life in such a way that neither dominated his life.

Having joined Arsenal as a 17-year-old in 1935 he made his first-class debut for Middlesex a year later, scoring 1,000 runs in the season. The following year he made his debut for England, the first of a 78-cap career that saw him score 5,807 runs at an average slightly over 50. As a batsman, he was as nat-

ural as summer dew, which he often encountered at cricket grounds, still wearing his dinner jacket having not had a wink of sleep. He may have been a professional, but the amateur ethos that burned within, and one passionately shared by his Middlesex and England colleague Bill Edrich, went far beyond the possession of three initials.

Compton, a brilliant improviser of strokes, reckoned that if you had talent you could score runs with the leg of a chair. He never quite went to that extreme, but with a habit of mislaying his bat, many of his deeds were often accomplished with the hide of another. Indeed, his last away century for Middlesex against Essex at Leyton was scored with a borrowed bat, a milestone he rattled up in two and a quarter hours.

According to those he played

Denis Compton 1918-1997

Tests	First-class	50s	100s	Runs	Average
78	132	278	5,806	50.00	64.41
Wickets	25	270			
Best bowling	5-70				
As first class					
Clubs	1935-36	1936-37	1937-38	1938-39	1939-40
Runs	838	300	28,942	50.85	
Wickets	22	1-28			
Best bowling	2-27				

with his range of stroke was apparently only exceeded by the optimism of his running between the wickets, when he would often wish his partner luck. It was a habit Trevor Bailey once described as "merely the basis for negotiation", and one which cost many their wicket.

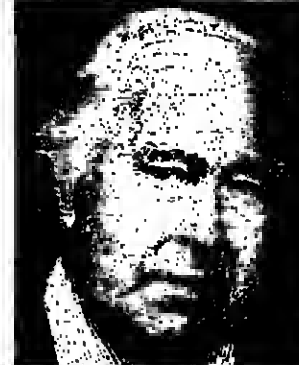
"Denis was an aggressive

cricketer, a tough fighter, and a bloody good bloke," said Doug Insole, the current president of Essex and the club's captain during the latter half of Compton's career.

"However, he could be unreliable," Insole continued. "I once sent him a postcard a day for three weeks to remind him that he was playing in a charity match for me." Compton turned up all right, but he was also expected at two other matches that day.

Like many of his era, Compton had difficulty in understanding some of the methods used by cricket's modern generation. He once told Graham Gooch - one of the few current players to have scored more first-class runs than him - to "forget the helmet and get some Brylcreem".

But although his deeds are rooted in a golden past, his sudden death after a hip operation



Compton: Natural batsman

complicated by diabetes will have touched many. For those that were lucky enough to see him play, the memories will surely remain undimmed.

However, we need not get too morose. As someone rightly pointed out when the Tannoy at Chelmsford brought us the bad news, "There'll be a hell of a party up there when he meets up with old Bill Edrich."

Obituary, page 16

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